

Lamartine  
and His Friends

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# LAMARTINE

AND HIS

## FRIENDS

BY

HENRI DE LACRETELLE

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TRANSLATED FROM THE FRENCH

BY

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## LAMARTINE AND HIS FRIENDS.

### I.

#### *First view of Lamartine.*

I BELONG to that privileged group which had the happiness to live in the light of the greatest genius of this age. I believe it to be my duty to tell all that I know of this noble life, that my contemporaries may record it later in history. I will tell of his greatness, and will not be silent upon his weakness. Such a statue should be placed in its true light. Sincerity is an homage to it ; and if the measure of praise is a hundred times larger than that of criticism, it is because I have penetrated the depths of a soul into which God has put the most of himself.

My companions and I often bowed before the ideas that he promulgated, but seldom before the man. We were satisfied in loving him, and I do not think that our friendship should exclude admiration. I was very young when I first saw him who was to charm and impassion so many years of my life. My father was walking in the garden of Bel-Air, one afternoon in autumn, when the name of Lamartine

resounded through the house. I remember that my mother smiled, while I felt myself growing pale.

M. de Lamartine, coming seldom to Mâcon, did not often visit his "confrère" of the Academy. He was thought to be a legitimist, and he believed himself one; on the contrary, my father was the leader of the liberal party in the city. Their relations were not intimate, but every bower and grove of Bel-Air was a kind of sanctuary for worship and incense-burning before the poet. From my early college days, I had bowed in admiration before two idols, Lamartine, and Hugo. Their verses, committed to memory, were the charm of my rambles, and the loving companions of my solitude. I could conceive of nothing more radiant than their glory. So, there was for me, something supernatural in such a visit. I should not have been more impressed, had it been announced that Homer, Virgil and Shakespeare, were coming down the avenue of horse-chestnuts, and that it was one of their divine hands, *then* ringing the door-bell.

My first impulse was to run away, still I wanted to see, so I hid myself in my mother's room. Noiselessly, I turned the slats of the window blind, and peeped through. Lamartine was sitting in front of the house, under a great tree, which partially shaded him. He must have been about forty years of age, it being in the early days of the government of July. He still preserved that well-known elegance, which



accorded so well with the purity and seriousness of his stanzas. His manly and gentle face, with its firmly carved features, stood out like marble, in the shadow of the tree. His harmonious, and simple manner, even in repose, asserted the strength of his genius, and his great black eyes, shining with the light of the Orient, reflected the goodness and beauty of his soul. By his dress and attitude one could easily tell that a part of his time was spent on horseback. Even at that time, he was wearing one of those high grey hats, afterwards so well known in Paris, and such as he continued to wear, summer, and winter, to the end of his days. He was fondling a greyhound that had followed him, and the first sound that I heard of that deep voice which was to resound from the tribune, and sink into the hearts of the people, was the name of his dog—Fido.

My father hastened to meet him. He had an exquisite grace in conversation, quite equal to M. de Lamartine, who was one of the most charming talkers in the world. I listened behind the blind, more absorbed in contemplation than interested in the discourse. They discussed politics, the academy, their travels, and the vintages. Finally M. de Lamartine deigned to inquire about me.

“He is a great boy, who can scarcely be roused from his reveries, and with strongly implanted republican ideas,” replied my father, “He has already

dedicated to you several ambitious poems, which I have thrown into the fire."

The poet counted his enthusiasts by thousands, but he was polite enough to smile benevolently, and I was much moved.

I remember, as the conversation became more familiar, that my father asked Lamartine, if he had a good memory. The reply was negative, which I found afterwards to be a calumny, but it was followed by this charming definition.

"Memory is the hand of the mind. It collects and coördinates, but produces nothing."

O, memory! I now make a pious invocation to thee! Bring back to me, without changing the purity and vibration, the many words of encouragement and advice, which have been addressed to me! Awaken the sleeping echoes of the past, and restore to me the traces of *his* steps, who always walked towards a good intention and noble aim! If thou wert faithful, how many volumes I could fill with what he said to me alone! But alas! 'tis gone, like the murmur of a great river whose waters are dead!

The second time that I saw Lamartine, was at Saint-Point. My father frequently visited him, and took me with him, one day, to breakfast. Almost every one who will read these lines, has made a pilgrimage there, either in reality, or through the pages where the poet reproduces those exquisite scenes

with more accuracy, and more brilliant coloring, than the Camera-obscura reproduces the image.

The surrounding mountains were more sombre than they are to-day. Financial difficulties had not compelled the sale of the beautiful forest, which then covered them. The high pointed tower, adorning the little castle, was not yet built. The great stable, now empty, resounded with neighing and stamping steeds. Beautiful young girls wandered gaily through the fields and woods. The cries of the peacocks were less melancholy, and all was more primitive and more pleasing.

Sitting in a court, near a stone table, that had been brought from the old abbey at Cluny, and which tradition said once belonged to Abelard, was a lady, looking over and throwing upon the grass, a heap of newspapers and pamphlets. This was Mme. de Lamartine. Their marriage had taken place about twelve years before, and already they had travelled extensively in Italy and the Orient, as Lamartine had served in the diplomatic corps as "chargé d'affaires" at Florence, and afterwards "ministre plénipotentiaire," to Greece. Their two children unfortunately died while in the East. The marriage had been a serious romance with Mme. de Lamartine. She was a young English lady, distinguished by her education and noble character. While travelling in Europe with her mother, she met Lamartine, then in

the glory of his "Meditations," and was attracted and dazzled by his talent. Even if she were conscious that she was giving herself to a genius at her peril, and that her fortune would only add a greater lustre to an already luminous train, she was willing to make the sacrifice, if there was to be one. There were difficulties. Lamartine's family, strictly orthodox in its catholicism, was alarmed at the invasion of a protestant. But he, who had examined, and well understood the heart, and who had also learned from the ancients that marriage is the "*res politica vitæ*," felt no scruples. However, the young lady, not willing to be an object of controversy, and confident that the religious belief to which the man she loved gave his tacit consent, ought to be the best, was quickly converted, and became a French woman, as nearly as any one can. She accomplished the sacrifice of her ideas with a steady purpose, and enthusiastic devotion, and by her persevering assimilation to French thought, and sentiment, she gradually lost her English characteristics. At first she had the zeal of a neophyte. Better versed in orthography than her husband, she assumed the charge of correcting his proofs, and she was alarmed at whatever offended her new dogma. As the pages grew more and more philosophical, she often exhausted herself in defending an orthodoxy that, at one time, had almost exiled her from her happiness. But an intelligence, so full

of light, comprehended at last that a zeal could be excessive, so dividing her time between her painting, in which she was an artist, and her works of charity, where she showed herself a simple Christian, she descended gracefully from her intolerance, and became in politics as well as in literature, the true companion of her husband. Inspired by admiration and a keen sense of her duty, she, who from her youth had quaffed from the fountains of aristocratic pride, became at length a republican militant.

In 1848, I saw her urge Lamartine towards the barricades, from which she knew he was praying never to return. I have seen her, times without number, aiding the most humble, and making them feel that she was one of them, without in the least losing her own dignity. Noble in her poverty, as she was modest in her luxury, she dwells a holy and happy martyr in my memory. At this time, however, when I first saw her, she was far from the lavas of those popular eruptions, and domestic sorrows, which subsequently overwhelmed her happiness and home. I remember that she was wearing mourning for her little Julia, who died in Judea, where they buried her under a palm, like a child of the Bible. No one knew better than Mme. de Lamartine, how to conceal her grief under the charming exterior of a hospitable hostess. She made us sit down beside her, while she told of the newspaper work before her.

Lamartine, descending the little wooden staircase that led from his study to the court, met there, Aimé Martin and Edgar Quinet. He was followed by an old priest, very thin, and very diffident, whom he designated as the old curé of Saint-Point. Aimé Martin had already married the widow of Bernardin de Saint Pierre. He made his début as an author in "*Lettres à Émilie*," a juvenile production, and had just published another book entitled, "*L'Education par les mères de famille*," where free thought breathed in every page. His unpleasant face with its little black moustache, appeared to me ill-humored and taciturn, but I was willing to believe in his redeeming qualities, in consideration of the good intention of his books, and the friendship Lamartine manifested towards him.

Edgar Quinet, beside whom I now have the honor of sitting in the National Assembly, was just beginning his career, which since then, not even interrupted by twenty years of exile, has been filled with poetry, eloquence, and patriotism. Already he had won popular favor by the success of his poem in prose, "*Ahasuerus*."

His meditative seriousness foreshadowed the philosopher and republican, and his conversation outlined the substance of a work upon the "*Revolution of Italy*," and also that magnificent "*History of the French Revolution*," which did not appear until

1861. He who later, aided by Michelet, attacked the Jesuits so vigorously, supplied what was lacking in the silence of Aimé Martin, in an earnest discussion with Mme. de Lamartine, who had all the ardor of a polemical religionist.

My father was, however, the best talker, and commanded the most attentive listeners.

The little dining-room, which was large enough to offer the most generous hospitality to all the celebrities of Europe for half a century, was redolent with the perfumes of autumn, and the repast was replete with cheer. Every one had an anecdote to relate. Edgar Quinet had just left Paris, and in Paris was the Abbaye-aux-Bois, and in the Abbaye-aux-Bois was M. de Chateaubriand, who had given Mme. Récamier a few pages of his "*Mémoires d'outre-tombe*," which were not to be published until after his death. Quinet, though a conversational genius, drew his inspiration from Chateaubriand, and narrated some of the breakfast-table conversations at Prague, where the royal family was exiled. These breakfasts were not so charming as Lamartine's.

I do not know how it happened that the conversation turned upon the Mâconnais. Saint-Point is only six miles from Cluny. My father with the eloquence and interest of a historian, retold the marvellous story of the Benedictine Abbey of Cluny, that



had given three popes to Rome, and for six centuries was the intellectual focus of the Catholic world. He told of the splendor of the sacristy, that had no parallel in France, of the library, and of the capacities of the abbey, which were so great, that when Saint Louis, and his retinue of three thousand lords, came to visit, not a monk was disturbed in his cell. He anathematized without pity the vandal, who, in 1810, had sold those grand old stones which even the Revolution had respected.

In the meantime, Mme de Lamartine had become visibly embarrassed ; the old curé bent his head over his plate ; the young ladies whispered to each other, and the servants smiled. It was evident that my father had chosen an unfortunate topic.

Lamartine, departing from his habitual courtesy, interrupted him, and taking religious houses as a kind of text, made a digression in favor of Mount Cassin. It was an admirable story of a morning visit to the monastery, which, as its name indicates, was situated on the heights. The departure was from the little inn at St. Germano, accompanied by a Roman prince, and his two nieces. The morning sun was just peeping over the trees, brightening the pathway, and gilding the windows of the abbey.

“ We rang the bell,” said Lamartine, “ and the father-porter opened the door. He saluted the prince, and made a furtive sign of the cross at the



sight of the nieces. He said that his house was holy, and nothing unclean could enter there. The uncleanness was a young laughing countess, and her pretty sister, trying to penetrate the dimness of the cloisters with their great black eyes. They shook their heads impatiently under their umbrellas, and used as many artifices and as much cajolery to persuade the father, as if they were dealing with St. Peter himself. The monk adhered, heroically, to his principles. We could hear the rich tones of the organ in the chapel. Through the half open gate, we could see the shining altar, and the outlines of a madonna, with more diamonds on her waxen neck, than an archduchess would wear at a ball. The air was fragrant with the sweet odors of violets and mignonette, growing abundantly in the courts.

“The two charming sinners reluctantly sat down on the outside steps, while we were permitted to enter, although one half of our pleasure was left behind. Our guide showed us everything, but we saw nothing. Finally we reached the library, permeated with the piety of ages, where the great books were reflected in the mirror-like brightness of its tiled floor. A young man, having the face of a Casanova, in the costume of a novice, was writing at a long table. I cast my eyes over his shoulder. He was writing a panegyric, in Latin, upon the celibacy of priests. The future monk rose. He belonged to a family of dis-

tion, and knew the prince. Desiring to do the honors of the house, he put his manuscript in a pocket of his cassock, and preceded us in the labyrinth of cloisters. He talked of his vocation with rather too much emphasis. Occasionally, there came from his lips a low whistling of the airs from the "Barbier de Seville." At our departure, he politely conducted us to the outside gate, and was brought face to face with our inquisitive petitioners. They captured their prey at once, and with a laudable vengeance overwhelmed him with affability, and questions. He stammered out his replies, blushing violently, and did not take his eyes from the chestnut curls of the signora. He had the prudence not to cross the threshold, and left us before he had in any way compromised himself. I watched him slowly disappearing in the shadows of the cloisters. Fragments of paper were falling behind him on the tiles. He was tearing to pieces his panegyric on celibacy."

Lamartine paused, and nothing more was said. We rose from the table. Coffee was served on the balcony, which extends from the drawing-room towards the garden.

My father took Lamartine aside and said.

"So I, inadvertently, made a blunder. Why didn't you allow me to finish my philippic? Certainly you do not favor the vandalism!"

Lamartine pointed to the old curé, who was

walking at a little distance from them, reading his breviary for his digestion.

“ I beg a thousand pardons, my dear friend,” said he, “ but *there* is the destroyer of Cluny.”

## II.

### *The Beginning of our Friendship.*

TWO years later, M. de Lamartine extended to me a friendship, which soon grew into that intimacy so precious to me. For my passionate admiration, he gave me an indulgent protection. In no other man of his intellect and power, was there ever found so much simple affection. He did not concern himself about the age of his companions ; he sought for souls to fertilize, as the wind, transporting the pollen, seeks for corollas. He knew that he was a second Plato, and desired disciples, and moreover, possessing an indefatigable benevolence, he was always ready with a helping word and smile.

One day, I was with Léon Bruys d'Ouilly and Guigue de Champvans, both of them relatives and friends, at the little Chateau d'Ouilly in the woods a few miles from Saint-Point.

Sometimes Léon and I tried to persuade ourselves that hunting was an agreeable pastime, but more often, we left our guns on the moss, and took our pencils to write a few unpretentious verses. Champvans, who disdained poetry, went off into the by-ways with the "Contes de Voltaire." Bruys, who

was a dozen years older than I, and whose unhappy history I shall relate further on, was a type of man that we envied, and a friend whom we adored. He was handsome and generous, and dissipated one fortune in travels, while waiting for another from inheritances. He was also a poet, painter, and musician, and more than all, thoroughly good. At that time, he was building a villa on the site of the paternal chateau, which, we all knew, was destined for an Italian countess, whom he was to marry, after the old count was dead. Léon's heart was given to all sorts of generosities, and his life to sentiment. He was wrong in writing a poem, for he lived one.

Guigue de Champvans, now Prefect of Gard, from whom I am separated by an abyss of political opinion, though hearts united from youth are never completely separated, was more intimate in the family of Lamartine than we were. He was private secretary, and lent himself with facility and fidelity, to all the different phases of Lamartine's political ideas. He saw more clearly than we, the imminency of the Republic, and if any one had predicted that this amiable and good fellow, a little of a sceptic too, would, later, have imbibed the very quintessence of clericalism, we would have cried out with holy horror at the impossibility. God is good not to let us penetrate the winding paths of the future. If Champvans is happy in his retrogressive conversion,

I congratulate him. I only regret not seeing him any more.

This Sunday morning, after the farmers and servants had gone to mass, a messenger came from Saint-Point, saying, M. de Lamartine had company, and expected us to lunch with him at two o'clock. We saddled our horses, and crossed the mountain. It was a beautiful summer day. The court at Saint-Point was full of empty carriages. The grooms pressed into service by Mme. de Lamartine, were going backward and forward, bending under the weight of dishes. The easy chairs in the drawing-room were occupied by ladies in handsome toilettes. The reception, generally so cordial, had the effect of a diplomatic ceremony. There was very little talking, and Lamartine seemed as wearied as if he were at his embassy at Florence. We three took refuge in the bay window. "Alas!" said Champvans, "We are in a wasp's nest of legitimists. M. de Lamartine has opened his doors only to the right to-day." "And not one of us wears a decoration! We will lose our reputations," I replied.

Bruys told us who the people were. That very handsome lady who seldom smiled, was Mme. de X——, living in the neighborhood. She was accompanied by her husband and Count Xavier de Maistre. M. de X., gave dinners to the Academicians, which was as near as he could ever get to the "pont des

Arts," perhaps because he was really entitled to admission.

Count Xavier de Maistre was repulsive to me simply on account of his name. . I saw beside him his terrible brother Joseph, standing at the foot of a protective scaffold, ill omened and sinister as a white Robespierre. But this unreasonable antipathy was not lasting, for the Count was a pleasant old man, with silvery white hair, lavishing his good humor upon all, and we could forgive him for having had such a brother, in consideration of his books "*Voyage autour de ma chambre*," and "*Le Lépreux de la cité d'Aoste*."

I will say nothing of the lunch, which was as sepulchral as a sacerdotal ceremony. There were too many marquises present for Lamartine to feel in his element. He did not talk a great deal. His neighbor Mme. de X—— was very beautiful, but stupid. Mme. de Lamartine tried to remove the stiffness by a promenade. She led us to the "pavilion," which has heard more magnificent orations than the Athenian portico, for Lamartine spent a part of his afternoons there for twenty years. This little retreat is situated on an elevation in the middle of the garden, right in the heart of a valley enclosed by beautiful hills. It had a broad mossy seat, resembling an oriental divan, a floor covered with mats and a hammock. Two sides were open, showing the rich land-

scape, like enchanting scenes of a theatre. Such was the little spot, that has taken so large a place in our memories. It has first heard the murmurs of those immortal verses. It has listened to the songs of those great artists who have visited Lamartine. It has received Hugo, Lablache, Liszt, Lamennais, Lacordaire, Béranger, la Malibran, Nodier, Janin, the kings and queens of poetry and song ; the lyres and flutes of the world.

Those who went to the "pavilion," this day, walked as solemnly as in a procession. M. de Mais-tre, no more entertaining than the rest, lighted a cigar for lack of a wax taper. The beautiful Mme. de X., made a little grimace, but resigned herself to the smoking of an illustrious man.

We thought a storm was about to appear in the celestial serenity of that charming face. Mme. de Lamartine made a sign, and the servant bringing the coffee, brought the pipes also. They were long chibouques from the Orient, full of yellow latakia. Bruys, Champvans and I prepared to light ours. We were sitting upon the divan, and we exhausted our matches in trying to reach the end of the pipes.

Mme. de X., grew quite pale, and taking her cousin by the arm, she went away, casting upon us terrible looks of scorn. We heard her say to her friend,

"Those young men imagine themselves in a beer



saloon!" Our position was very delicate. We had put to flight the most charming woman of the Faubourg St. Germain, and as a recompense, had been insulted by a mouth worthy of Murillo.

"Let us invoke the gods for a breeze to extinguish our matches," whispered Bruys, who was a troubadour.

"No, indeed! I protest by a whole Vesuvius. Down with the aristocrats!" exclaimed the revolutionary Champvans.

"But when they are only twenty-five years old." I pleaded, taking the jasmine stem from my mouth.

Mme. de Lamartine had lost nothing of the scene. nor of our comments. Such a manifestation could have but one interpretation. Mme. de X. intended it as a lesson in good taste.

Mme. de Lamartine disappeared, and very soon returned, leading Mme. de X. by the hand, saying, "You do not know what you are refusing, my dear friend. The incense, burned in the Delphia Temple, was extracted from this latakia. Pardon me for bringing you back to the perfumes and habits of the Orient, and permit yourself to be incensed, as a Greek Sultana that you are."

Then, kneeling down before us, Mme. de Lamartine lighted our chibouques, with the cigar of M. de Maistre.

M. de X. was not much happier than his charm-

ing wife. I have just said that he was anxiously hoping for a chair at the academy. Death alone could offer an opportunity and prospective hope, so that the illness of an Academician imposed a consultation with his cook. He was a man of strong mind conciliatory, showing himself a grand lord only by his facility in fascinating the ladies, who felt the charm of his condescension and kindly services. Generally, he was as genial as a mandarin, but what will not the academic fever lead a man to do, or say?

I had not the honor of being known to him. After the episode of pipes, my name was mentioned. He came hurriedly towards me. By way of parenthesis I must say, that the newspapers, merely to fill up a space, had announced the illness of my father, consequently, there had been more or less talk about his successor. M. de X, jumped at the question, without any preparation. He could not have sprung with more agility towards the dome of the "pont des Arts," under which, he had sworn that he should be received some day.

"How is your father?" said he to me, with vehement interest.

"Very well, or I should not be here."

M. de X. almost fainted, although he had a true and good heart.

"Ah! so much better!" he replied.

Lamartine told me afterwards, that he had seldom

experienced such a sensation of coldness as in hearing the intonation of that "so much better." Those few words expressed more sadness, than the wails of the chorus, in the *Orestes* of Æschylus.

"What! Is M. de Lacretelle not going to die! Is it possible that I shall not go back to Paris to give my dinners, and to make my visits? Will no one resign his chair to me?" All this, and more, was in the little words. "So much better."

And they were addressed to a son!

At last the guests departed, and M. de Lamartine declared that he would not invite the nobility again very soon.

The more he inclined towards democracy, the more efforts his family made to return him to his *peers*, as if such a man had peers. It is in vain for any one to throw himself into the current of the river of Liberty; there are always interfering friends with good intentions, who bring back the old clothes left on the shore.

Lamartine asked for a peplum, and they brought him a marquis' costume, but he would not put it on.

When the guests had gone, Lamartine, who had been an exquisite in dress at the end of the Empire, put on his old gray jacket and great pantaloons again, and came back to us, with his macaw on his shoulder, and a pack of greyhounds gambolling about him.

"Now let us amuse ourselves," said he.

We were in the blue room. The evenings were growing cool, and the fire of vine-fagots was lighted, as usual every evening, summer and winter. Around the table was a group of nieces, who for twenty years, succeeded each other, like the morning stars.

We went into the billiard room, where at one time an inevitable and pertinent pun escaped from M. Sauzet, the president of the assembly, who was playing with Lamartine.

"As many caroms as I may make, you will always have 'cinq points' more," (Saint-Point).

Lamartine did not amuse us, he enchanted us. "I was thinking of you yesterday," said he to Bruys, and here are a few verses that I wrote on the pommel of my saddle, while riding in the woods of OUILLY.

Then he read to us these lines, which are in his 'Memoires.'

#### A LÉON BRUYS D'OUILLY.

Enfants de la même colline  
Abreuvés au même ruisseau,  
Comme deux nids sur l'aubépine  
Prés du mien Dieu mit ton berceau.

Souvent je vis ta jeune mère  
De nos prés foulant le chemin  
Te mener comme un jeune frère  
Vers moi, tout petit par la main,

Et te soulevant vers ma lyre  
En ses bras qui tremblaient un peu,  
Dans mes vers t'enseigner à lire.  
Enfant qui joue avec le feu.

So as it often happened, we heard the first vibrations of those silvery rhymes. Bruys was happier than if he had heard of the count's death.

Tea was served, and Lamartine laid down, as usual, on the great sofa. He would often fall into a doze; then Mme. de Lamartine would beg us to rouse him with questions, for such a sleep spoiled his night's rest. The waking was always bright. To be more agreeable, he resorted to excuses for keeping awake, chasing the dogs through the rooms, searching for cigars in mysterious closets, where there were valuable banknotes, pages of poetry still more valuable, tobacco and Windsor soap, all heaped together in delightful confusion. He lighted a cigar, but did not smoke more than half. Then he looked over a game of "Boston" that one of his sisters had arranged. He never became interested, for he detested cards. "I have been a gambler" he said, "from necessity; that was in the time of poor Graziella, in lue des Florentins, at Naples. I did the same as chevalier de Grammont, but more honestly. My family refused to send me means, and they were right. For weeks, I ate nothing but a little macca-roni, and then I gained a thousand piastres, with

which I bought new boats for all the fishermen of Ischia. I knew a wonderful combination, which I had studied long enough to have gained a baccalauréate, and if I had applied myself to it diligently, I should have been as rich as Rothschild. I am a gambler still, but as I cannot indulge my passion, after having received the benedictions of all the apostolic hands of Europe, I have resigned myself to the planting of vines.

"The vines are the green cloth of the gaming table. The sun and the clouds, are the two croupiers, who throw you fortune or ruin. We will go to Monceaux to-morrow, and I will make a calculation of my grapes. I must have eighty thousand francs of wine, this year, or else I shall be reduced to the necessity of killing my last aunt, as M. de X., wanted to kill Henri de Lacretelle's father, this afternoon. I will ride Saphyr, and we will go by the way of Milly, and compose poetry on the road."

Nine o'clock sounded. It was Lamartine's bedtime. He carried with him one of his favorite books, Mme. Sévigné's or Voltaire's letters, which he never wearied of, or a book of travels of which his library was full. Later in life, he was absorbed in Thiers "*Histoire de l'Empire*." He was more charmed with those pages which tell of him whom the world so long accused of being only a contemplator.

He went away candle in hand, followed by his white hound.

Almost every evening was passed in this way. We remained half an hour longer with the ladies. One of the party, who could not keep a secret, betrayed the confidence of a visit made or received by Lamartine, I do not remember which, explaining why he needed the eighty thousand francs. Mme. de Lamartine entertained us, with accounts of her Eastern travels. At last, the candles were lighted, and dripped down over the hands of a gay company, who mounted the broad winding stairs. The bed-room doors closed upon laughing good-nights, and we went off to our rooms, proud in the consciousness that something historical and beautiful was being prepared in the house. We knew that the next morning at five o'clock Lamartine would be at work upon one of his wonderful poems, for he was then writing "*La chute d'un Ange.*"



### III.

#### *Life at Saint-Point.*

I LINGER over familiar details, for nothing concerning Lamartine is lacking in interest. His historical side I do not propose to review. I will show him as I have always seen him, in the intimacy of his home, and as I think of him, in his simplicity and grandeur, and as I need him still, to aid and strengthen me, whenever I am not near Victor Hugo.

No one dared to rise late at Saint-Point. Lamartine had risen. We would imitate him in that at least and see if from the little study, at the end of the house, there would not escape an inspiration, which gliding along the gallery like an electric current in the morning air, would reach our imaginations. How many times, as the village clock was striking the early morning hour, and the sun was drying the mists of the valley, I have leaned from my window, towards that sanctuary, where the high priest was praying after his own fashion, by writing one of those grand pages, that a loving public will never forget!

Lamartine in the morning went directly from his bedroom to his study, which was a little room, containing only a table of black wood, and a high easy



chair. He never disturbed a servant. Throughout the whole season, he lighted his fire at five o'clock, and prepared a cup of tea.

During those long morning hours, he covered pages of enormous dimensions with history, politics, and memoirs, writing with marvellous rapidity, and with an elegance which was the last remains of his aristocracy.

How did he compose his poems? He never told me, but I could divine. He belonged to his dogs, more than the dogs belonged to him. There were half-a-dozen of them coming constantly, scratching at the door opening on the staircase leading to the court. Lamartine was never deaf to these appeals, and the door was always opened. They seemed to know the days that their slave devoted to poetry, and came and went oftener than usual. Between the comings, and goings, Lamartine would compose a verse. And it was in this way, that "Jocelyn," and "La chute d'un Ange," were written. Fido was his co-worker.

The poet was like an Indian in his respect and admiration for animals. In his study he had cages full of birds, filling the room with a noise insupportable to a man less patient. When the beautiful West Indian birds, whose plumage was like a painter's palette, were dead, they were replaced by common canaries. Paroquets and macaws, added their shrill

cries to the clamor. All sounds of life were necessary to Lamartine, who was a musician by the harmony of his words.

He never finished dressing until the breakfast bell rang. Mme. de Lamartine and the guests did not wait for him. He would finally come, in his old gray jacket, having probably written twenty letters, independently of his literary work. He always suffered more or less from dyspepsia, and consequently ate very little, but he filled his plate from which he fed his dogs, to the destruction of the dresses near by. He did not talk a great deal in the morning, not because of fatigue from his work, for that he did not feel, but from anxiety in business affairs, which were beginning to harass him. As soon as he perceived that his silence affected his guests, he would rouse himself and tell how he had spent the morning. Often, still filled with the spirit of what he had written, he would say to us, as to a comrade. "And what have you done, Lacretelle, and *you*, Bruys." He seemed to put our poor lucubrations into the same scale with the effulgence of his genius, and in good faith too, for in his estimation, the man who lifts a handful of sand for a noble purpose, is as worthy of eminence as he who moves a block of marble. During his conversation, like a disciple of Brahma, he would help himself to the vegetables, especially spinach, and pumpkin. The macaw would perch on

the shoulders of the guests, screaming in their ears, and claiming his share, but Lamartine paid no more attention to him than to the others.

One of our party always arranged the excursion for the day, making it long in prospective, but generally we were obliged to wait for the messenger who brought the letters and papers over the mountain, thereby gaining several hours over the regular post, and we seldom started for our walk before three o'clock.

Invariably after breakfast, Lamartine carried bread to his horses. He had a dozen at least, though generally of little value. For twenty years, there was only a span for the carriage, and a pony for the saddle. He bought his horses either in the country near by, or had them sent from Limousin. He went into ecstasies over each acquisition, the animal was incomparable, equal to the mare of the Prophet, and an enthusiastic stanza was composed before each stall. The exaggeration had the merit of sincerity. Lamartine loved his Creator in his creatures. His life had been spent among horses from the time he was a body-guard, at Beauvais, up to his great encampment, in the desert of Syria. After the horse review, we would go to the pavilion to smoke and read the papers, while the ladies prepared for the walk or ride. Mme, de Lamartine, like all Englishwomen, was a skilful horsewoman, and taught the nieces.

This day however, the political news was unimportant, and the papers were quickly run over, and thrown aside; Bruys, and Champvans, were obliged to go away, so Lamartine decided that he and I should go to Milly on horseback, taking the path over the mountain, while the rest of the party went round by the regular route, in the carriage,

I knew what a horse-back ride with Lamartine under these conditions, promised, and was enchanted with the programme. It would amount to this; simply to take the horse by the bridle, and walk beside him. When I am in the stirrups, I like to run, but a few experiences with M. de Lamartine decided me never to take a horse when I went with him, for then, I could listen better to him, and as it were, put myself more completely in his shadow.

The great dog, and the grey-hounds followed us. Lamartine, though the least sportsman of the country, carried a gun slung across his shoulders. I could not understand the use of it, even after he explained, that it was a guarantee against an encounter (altogether improbable) with a mad dog, for I truly believe, that this duelist of other days, would have hesitated to put a ball into the brute, if he had met him.

In going to Milly, one is obliged to leave the departmental route at once, and take the steep mountain path, which leaves the Mâconnais behind. The

mountain grows more and more wooded, as one approaches the summit. We walked through cypresses grown from seeds sown by the wind among the broom. Lamartine often stopped, to let his horse nibble the blades of grass, on the roadside. I profited by these haltings, to question him. I was too young then, to familiarly turn back the leaves of a life already covered with fame, so I confined myself to those questions, that would be likely to interest him. They were enough to inspire one of those inexhaustible improvisations, as natural to him, as water to its source. He would mount his horse, and gallop for a little while without any apparent motive, dismount at a dangerous place, talking, talking all the while. I followed his movements, so as not to lose a word. I was transported with admiration of his greatness, and the multifariousness of his work, and yet he had not then written "*Les Girondins*," nor "*Les Confidences*," nor "*Raphaël*," nor "*Le Civilisateur*," nor pronounced one of his thrilling discourses, nor made the Republic.

"I have not given my true measure," said he, "nor shown how much I am worth. I would like to have the moving, and direction of my government."

"You will never serve under the Orleans?"

"No, nor under any king. There are many who loved the Bourbons, as I have, because we mistook them for representatives of Liberty. They have

wearied us. Their race will preserve upon its forehead the stains of blood, shed in July. My ideas all incline, naturally, to an efficient domination."

"The Republic?" I asked, almost tremblingly.

"You will see it, once, and not unlikely twice," responded Lamartine. "It will be the necessary succession of Louis Philippe. I am only twenty years younger than he, and I shall be an old man when he dies. All I ask, is to leave behind a mould, and even if the statue which comes from it should be quickly broken, it will be reproduced." His assuring words excited great hope in me.

"For to return to what you call my physiognomies, I am not known, even as a poet. I have never made but one poem, and that is lost."

I drew nearer to him.

"The poem was entitled "*Les Pêcheurs*," there were twelve thousand lines, very superior to *Jocelyn*."

"How happened you to lose it?"

"I had taken it with me on some of my journeys, and thought that I left it in a trunk in the attic, at Saint-Point, or at Monceaux, but I have searched every where, in vain."

"And can you remember nothing of it?"

"I have never been able to remember one verse of Lamartine's. They do not enter into the framework of my memory. It is the result of a classical education that I retain only those of Voltaire."

Then, he recited one of the lightest, like "Les Fils de la Vierge," but less pure.

"Perhaps," he continued, "life will not permit me to give my true literary character. There is a book ripening slowly in me, as my sun goes down. I shall call it, "Psaumes." The least unworthy of all my thought, will be found there, wrapped in verse, and it shall be my will, and testament, before God, in religion and politics. If any of my works float on the waves of time, I hope it will be this. I shall make a beginning, and write a few verses this Autumn."

He never did it.

Unceasing action, anxieties, and finally childishness bowed down his giant intellect in his declining years, and absorbed the book that would have sung in future ages, like the psalms of David. If these great thoughts, sculptured as it were in stone, could have been scattered, there would have been fewer materialists, and less superstition among our people. Politics in the voice of such an apostle, would have become a religion, and the Republic would have given us the evangelists.

We began to descend the mountain towards Milly. At the left, on the height, rose the village church of Saint-Sorlin. I saw the little house, where people said, a sweetheart of Lamartine's had once lived. He glanced at it, but said nothing. He



pointed to a meadow, below the house, between the road to Mâcon and the river.

"I fought a duel there, once," said he.

"With whom?" I asked, hesitatingly.

"With a Polonais."

I did not dare to ask another question, for fear that there might be an episode, upon which he would rather be silent.

"Have you fought very often?" I said.

"O yes. All, who drew breath in the eighteenth century, had the fever of duelling. The captains, dismissed by the Empire, challenged us, at every corner. I stifled my duels under the grass, on which they were fought. The only celebrated one that I ever had was with *Pépé*. I was wrong, in generalizing an accusation which pertained only to the common people. They were avenged by a man of honor, who put three inches of steel into my breast. Since then, General *Pépé* has become my friend. I always liked the exercise of fire-arms, and fencing; I was born to move the masses, and I would rather have done it by the sword, than by the word. I really believe, that I should have been a captain of distinction. I have missed my vocation," he added smiling sadly, "but God has ordered my life better, for my conscience."

I looked at him intently, while he thus accused himself, recalling what Victor Hugo had said.



"I would have been a soldier, if I were not a poet," and my mental reflection was, that human inferiority was to be found even in men of genius.

At length, we reached Milly. One of the gentlemen who had escorted Mme. de Lamartine, came to meet us. This was M. de Champeaux, who, though not appearing in his character as secretary, always accompanied the family. He was a count, a legitimist, attached to the church, and a man of great refinement. Though he was often roused with indignation at the apparent heresies that he was obliged to copy, yet he performed his task conscientiously. Sometimes, however, his frankness exceeded its bounds, and I have heard him criticize severely certain doctrines that he had just transcribed, and this, too, before the master, who had the goodness not to be irritated.

Mme. de Lamartine arrayed herself at his side so far as the dogma was concerned, but her admiration for her husband carried her far away.

The fatigue of the controversy would sometimes lead Lamartine to make concessions, and blemishes. M. de Champeaux has to his account some deplorable modifications of text. May posterity pardon him! He was, nevertheless, faithful unto death to Lamartine. On their second return from the East, he was taken suddenly ill, died on the vessel, and was buried at sea.

"The ladies are waiting for you, in the drawing-room," said he.

Lamartine urged his horse, and hastened on with a beating heart.

"I feel as if I were going to meet my mother, and feel once more her kiss upon my brow," he exclaimed. "Milly! This is the Himalaya of my happiness!"

I had never seen Milly, or rather, I had never seen it except through the splendor, and tenderness of that poem, called, "*La Terre natale*." The name always suggested to me a cheerful smiling landscape, with a house outlined against the sky, supported by angels, like the house of the virgin which was borne by celestial agency, until it found, at last, a resting place at Lorette. My angels, only had an existence in the stanzas of the poet. My disenchantment was complete. The framework of mountains, enclosing Milly, were gloomy and sad, without being picturesque. The garden or quadrangle was so small, that a curé could walk to the end, before he had read more than half a page of his breviary. The dwelling was very contracted, and looked like a cottage of a poor man. There was not the action, nor cheerfulness of a farm. The rooms opened into each other, under festoons of spider-webs. The drawing-room was almost divested of its furniture, and the dust was so thick, that we left the impression of our feet

on the floor. Mme. de Lamartine, and the nieces looked cold in all this gloom, and I was indignant with myself, for not feeling any emotion. But in a very few minutes, all was transfigured. Lamartine has rarely been more earnest or magnetic. He led us through the house, with enthusiasm in every look and gesture. He showed his mother's room, his sister's and his own. There was a story to tell under each door-way. He brought again to life the beauty, and songs of those women, though two of them had been dead twenty-five years. He placed his mother at her work-table, surrounded by her little family, and his father, with his gun upon his shoulder, going to his vineyards. He showed us the meadow, where he used to meet Janette, the little peasant, he innocently loved through the medium of marguerites and eglantine, to which he alludes in his "*Mémoires*." He made himself the resurrectionist of his youth, of these lifeless bodies, of his early hesitations and presentiments of his future glory, whose first echoes were repeated by those black stones. He made Champeaux weep, who ordinarily, was very unimpressible, and he never knew a prouder moment than when at our departure, an old vintager, without removing his hat said to him,

"Good by, Alphonse."

I went away from Saint-Point the next morning. I took courage and left on the mantle-piece of my

room a few humble verses upon the bell at Saint-Point. Two days later, at Bel-Air, I received as a response and encouragement, that despairing but pathetic hymn, with the same title "La cloche de Saint-Point," that Lamartine had had the goodness to dedicate to me.

## IV.

### *The Receptions in Paris.*

I WANT to tell of Mme. de Lamartine's receptions, at Paris, from 1837 to 1848. In those few years, which were long enough to fill twenty existences with triumph, wonder and tears, there was preparing the supreme power of a day, comparative distress, ruin, and finally abandonment. The household was installed in apartments, on the first floor of No. 82, rue de l'Université, situated between a court and gardens. The maximum rent at that time was six thousand francs, and it represented the establishment of a nobleman. The stair-case did not ascend higher than the first floor in this wing of the hotel, and thus the sanctity of the English home was preserved.

I will endeavor to give a description of the rooms, where so much has occurred to make them historic. Through that large dining-room, and the drawing-room, with its great divans, and the studio where there was always a fresh painting of Mme. de Lamartine's on the easel, have passed and repassed political, artistic and plebian Europe. The privileged few have opened the door at the right, and discovered

the beautiful cabinet, where Lamartine never worked, filled with books, collections of harmless poetry, which had been presented to him, newspapers, and public documents of the Assembly. They have also been welcome to the little room, where Lamartine slept, and where he wrote, in the early morning, and where he received the crowned heads of the world, the thinking heads, I mean. They can also recall hanging in the studio, the portrait of the poet, with his two greyhounds at his feet, painted by Decaisnes, the odor of Eastern tobacco which permeated everything, and the clear, bright fires blazing in the fireplace.

Alas! who now inhabits this sanctuary of his glory and goodness, despoiled by a Revolution twenty-two years ago? Who has felt moved to restore within those walls the generous hospitality of Lamartine!

At this epoch, approaching ruin was foreshadowed by financial anxieties. An elegant style of living was preserved, although there never was an expenditure of more than forty thousand francs a year. I do not include the charities, which doubled the disbursements.

M. de Lamartine brought four horses to Paris, two for the carriage, and two for the saddle. The staff of domestics was very modest. There were no grand dinners, except on the day when the Republic

of Geneva sent a famous great trout from Lake Lemman. Every evening, there were several guests, who came by chance or were self-invited. Lamartine often went for a horseback ride to the "Bois de Boulogne," returning only in time for the session. This was during the first years of his Parisian life before politics completely controlled him. Although he received his friends every evening, there was always a little more ceremony than usual, on Saturday.

Every year, he gave a fine concert, and a lottery, for which the charities of Mme. de Lamartine served as a pretext. But his secret reason was to create an absolutely necessary occasion "for writing a poem. He wrote now, only under compulsion, and an urgent occasion was afforded by the lottery. The stanzas, fancifully written by Lamartine, and enframed in arabesques, were the principal attraction. Gold was spent freely for the verses, and each rhyme assuaged a grief.

While telling of his poems of this time, let me note one singularity. Lamartine would not have read one of them in public, under any circumstances. He assumed that it would destroy his political influence. He rarely went out in the evening, and seldom did us the honor of coming more than once, during the winter, to the literary reunions held at my father's. It was there where Emile Deschamps, Jules Le Fèvre, and many others recited their first productions. Victor Hugo read to us "Les Rayons



et les Ombres." My father opened the poetical herbarium of his old age. There was an excellent public, in perfect accord, proud of having among their number some gifted women, who threw their acclamations with full hands at the laureate of this poetical tournament.

In spite of supplications, in spite of smiles, we could never obtain a single line from M. de Lamartine, and God knows, how happy he always was to let us breathe in the spring-like freshness of his verse, at Saint-Point, or at Monceaux.

At Paris, his lips opened only for political speeches. This resolution of poetical abdication was affected. He made a mistake in granting such a concession to M. Cunin-Gridaine.

His political life changed him a little. He had always the same exquisite delicacy, and simplicity, in a "tête-a-tête," but in public, and to those who did not know him, his great height made him sometimes haughty. He carried into his circle of polemicists and strategists, the manners and habits he had adopted while in the Legation. Those who have thought him supercilious, have only seen him under such circumstances, and judged him superficially. These delicate shades were penetrable by his friends, who, after the preliminary words, saw his goodness shining through his eyes, and gleaming through the varied expressions of his mouth.



I preferred going to rue de l'Université the ordinary evenings, still I went often enough on Saturdays, to be able to give a few sketches. I shall forget much, for there was always a crush. It seems to me now, that every one upon whom the sun has shone, has been there, at one time or another, During the the first years, I met Montalembert several times. This man drew upon himself the aversion of the democracy, after having served it. We only half forgave him at the last, on account of his hatred for the Empire, and his love for the Republic . . . . . of the United States.

I remember him as quite a young man, without a beard, wearing his coat buttoned closely to his throat, as was the fashion then, and as M. Laboulaye wears his now. His clerical tendencies, and aristocratic pedantry, then quite apparent, held me at a distance, although he was already famous for a libel suit, and distinguished for a talent, of which the chamber of Peers recognized its revolutionary side. But he was too much in the church, to be very strong in Liberty. Much as I have admired him, I have never been sorry not to have been intimate with him. Lamartine, who was so impartial, that he had a tendency to praise his enemies, seldom met him, and always spoke of him with antipathy. Subsequently, this antipathy deepened into anger against Montalembert, when in March 1848, he attempted to rouse Europe against

the Republic, putting himself at the head of the Polonaise delegation and demanding the intervention of arms. Lamartine never failed to recall this episode, during the innumerable reactionary explosions of M. de Montalembert.

Montalembert caught a glimpse of truth, under its different masks, as he approached the tomb.

It is said, that before he died, in speaking of the men of the Low Church, he exclaimed, "and to think that I have sacrificed forty years of my life to them."

In one corner of the drawing-room was a circle from which a masculine voice confidently launched forth its sharp epigrams, and doubtful anecdotes.

It belonged to Mme. Sophie Gay, the mother of Mme. Emile de Girardin, who inherited much of her mother's mental vigor, without having impoverished her.

Mme. Gay wrote romances, of trifling value, and recklessly darted her words like lances, which always carried against the adversaries of M. de Lamartine, but only in rue de l'Université. She did not attract us very much by her contralto tones, though there was no need of approaching her, in order to hear her. Lamartine detested bitterness of speech, and would not have invited her so frequently, had she not been the mother of so brilliant a daughter, and Mme. de Lamartine would have made the sign of the cross on

hearing her voice, if she had not been the mistress of the house, and forced to give her approbation.

The daughter, who accompanied her during many years as a beautiful Muse, under the lights of the Restoration, when she was simply Delphine, often came after her mother's visits had ceased. She was more remarkable for her imagination than for her poetry, although she had written "*Judith*," which is a fine drama. Her intelligence, almost amounted to genius. Her conversation would have made one forget that she was a woman, if her beauty had not recalled it at every moment. We shall find this luxurious, and variable nature again, at Saint-Point, where we can study it leisurely. I shall never forget the kindness she showed, in consecrating a whole number of the "*Vicomte de Launay*" to some stanzas that I sent to Victor Hugo upon "*La Place Royale*." She often met the old General Girardin at Lamartine's, who listened ecstatically to her, and could scarcely be restrained from announcing that Delphine was his daughter-in-law. He was very proud of his son Emile, as the Republic has been since, and as Liberty will always be.

M. and Mme. de Circourt usually accompanied the Girardins. Mme. de Circourt died after a long illness, through which she did not lose her Muscovite wit. Her husband still lives. He knows as much as if he had passed twenty lives in reading, and he pos-

sesses an almost supernatural memory. Dates, facts forms of discourse, and typographical order, are indelibly engraved upon the impressible tissues of his brain. He is never more happy than in rendering a service, by replying to no-matter-what question in the most elaborate and profuse manner, but after all, he could not help it. Lamartine used to say, "Circourt is an Alexandrine library. I spend my life in consulting his shelves, and in trying to decipher his papyrus."

In 1848, a caprice of friendship, or of aristocracy, decided Lamartine to send the Count de Circourt, as Ambassador of the Republic to Washington. He represented it loyally. He opened his case of diplomacy, and did his work as if he had grown old in statesmanship. Barnum did not dare to propose a salary to a man like him. If he had he would have made a fortune in exhibiting so excellent and incomparable a phenomenon.

Emile Deschamps was one of the most constant visitors. He held himself at a distance, and tossed back the ball to Mme. Sophie Gay and Mme. de Girardin, only it rebounded with good-will from the hands of that wonderful juggler, and the thought preserving its beauty and grace, remained pure, and harmonious.

He died six months ago, in blindness, at Versailles, carrying only one regret from a world, where

he had had so much happiness. This regret was for French literature, and not for himself. The Academy had not condescended to nominate this most refined writer, this Phidias of rhyme, who, though not living in the eighteenth century seemed to have crossed every one of its literary circles. He went out of the world, excluded from the "Palais du Pont des Arts," like Balzac, Béranger, Lamennais, and Dumas, who would have formed with him a whole Academy, and who must have smiled when the immortals refused them immortality.

Vigny, Alexandre Soumet, Guiraud, Jules Le Fèvre, abbé Féletz and Briffaut, often came there also. Vigny brought his "chefs d'œuvres," like "Stello," and "Le Cachet Rouge;" Soumet, tragedies that would have been classic in the future, if they had been less so at their first representation; Jules Le Fèvre, those poems, whose verses were so luxuriantly interlaced, like the branches of a virgin forest, that their very vigor produced shades and coolness. Féletz, whose title of abbé, served only to dignify him as a theatrical critic, was a master, even at that epoch of imperial obscurity. Briffaut, brought a clericalism of circumstances, imposed upon him by a pension, which did not hinder him from writing letters, bearing a strong resemblance to those of Voltaire.

Jules Janin, whose wit and intelligence were

scarcely quicker than his movements, mounted the stairs every Saturday. He was then only in the tenth year of his literary reign. At each Olympiad, he renewed his oil for the contest, and his "verve" as a poetical novelist. He possessed in the highest degree a knowledge of good taste, and the most exquisite and flexible expressions of our language. He was grateful for admiration, and never forgot who had moved or excited him. So it was, that through the Empire, he never failed to speak with the most respectful enthusiasm of Victor Hugo, the grand exile of Guernsey, nor of Lamartine the exile of the Interior.

After the appearance of "Lucrèce," he brought Ponsard to Lamartine, who received him with that effusion, which soon established a fraternity, if not equality. This was almost an event. Lamartine, Hugo, Vigny and Sainte Beuve had been the acknowledged leaders of "l'ècole romantique," to which we younger men all belonged. Our instincts drew us towards the true, and beautiful, and we made ourselves the servants of that Shakespeare, revealed in the splendors of "Hernani," "Marion Delorme," "Le Roi S'amuse," and of "Ruy Blas."

The classic party seized some of the beauties of "Lucrèce," and thought to avenge its own interregnum by exaggerating these beauties, and opposing Ponsard to Hugo, which was like opposing a consti-

tutional prince to Charlemagne. Our romantic faith was one of the expressions of our love for Liberty. We were indignant when Lamartine patronized Ponsard, and almost accused him of defection.

Happy epoch,—when the civil war was only between those who held to the three rules of composition, and those who wanted to depart from them !

The personal qualities of the man and poet, after a while, made us pardon the favors with which Lamartine overwhelmed Ponsard, and we agreed that he was not wrong in extending his hand to a laureate who gave promise of being a master.

A few years later, Ponsard held a high position in our estimation. He took his gun in December, 1851, but unhappily, soon after, placed it in the library of the Senate. He exhausted his own heroism in the characters of his heroes. He only knew how to be an Academician of great talent, and tender heart, and this is why so many mourn for him, who died so young.

The attitude of the Academy towards Lamartine, was rather peculiar. Individually, every member came to the receptions of their illustrious “*confrère*,” who conferred upon them individually a continual honor, of which as an association they were very jealous. To be a member of the Academy, and not appear at one of the sessions where the time was passed in heated discussions over a dictionary,—a labor resem-



bling the tapestry of Penelope ; to indulge in a horse-back ride every day ; to travel in the Orient, and attract the attention of all Europe to one's tent ; finally to effect a Revolution, and proclaim a Republic was a code not found in the manual of the Cupola of the "Pont des Arts." The Academy protested officially, by epigrams, and each guilty composer came Saturday night, to get absolution, so as to recommence the next Thursday at the regular reunion, Lamartine willingly repeated the epigrams, and they did not in the least destroy the beauty of his smile. The most bitter assailants were the most indignant at the little verse of Casimir Bonjour ; but to be indignant, they were obliged to bring the verse back.

Lamartine, who, during the session, had stood almost alone in Parliament, was now becoming more and more necessary to the opposition, and often was its leader. Every morning, his speeches were read in every house in Paris. In spite of his reservations, one felt that his chest was large enough to contain the breath of a Revolution. The court was not ignorant of this, and ministries were offered to him, which he refused. The whole official world would leave every other house for his. Garneir-Pagès and Ledru-Rollin, brought M. Molé there. All the legations, and foreign travellers of note, came to see a Parisian assembly, which was at the same time, Athenian, for here were formed artists, polemicists, peers of France, mar-



quises who had not taken their oath, and where the nuncio risked stepping on the toes of Béranger. Mme. de Lamartine, who had the hospitality of an Arab, went from group to group with cordial greetings. When Lamartine wanted a congenial spirit, he found it in the corner where he had left Voltaire. All the conversations, political indiscretions, and chance encounters, served as a text of the chroniclers for the following week. The modest lamps of that apartment in rue de l'Université, were the light-houses illuminating intelligent Paris, and this lasted for fifteen years.

The sudden advent of the Republic, brought other groups into that room. Duchesses were replaced by leaders of political clubs. Barbès, in the enthusiasm of his chivalrous nature, often came seeking encouragement. Blanqui, to be combatted, and disarmed. Deputations came crowding in, as at the Hotel de Ville.

In the early days of March 1848, Lamartine was obliged to install himself as Minister of Foreign Affairs. As he sat down in M. Guizot's chair, he found his own name written on a sheet of paper, and the ink scarcely dry, where the Minister of Louis Philippe had refuted the last speech of Lamartine, his successor.

During the existence of the Executive Commission, Lamartine lived in a house of Madrid, Bois de

Boulogne. A month before, France would have given him the "Tuileries," by acclamation, but he would not listen to an impulse, however grateful, that would compromise the Republic.

## V.

### *Society at Saint-Point.*

ONE of the most delightful seasons, that I can recall in that luminous life, was spent at Saint-Point. There was a host of visitors, and I was obliged to take refuge in an old house, below the garden, which had once been a presbytery. Mme. de Girardin, M. and Mme. D'Esgrigny, Lafon, and his daughter, were among the guests. Two nieces, Mme. de Pierreclos, and Mlle. Valentine de Cessiat, who was just merging into womanhood, aided Mme. de Lamar-tine in doing the honors of the house. Mme. de Pierreclos was the widow of one of the best friends of my youth, Count Lèon de Pierreclos, who died in early manhood. He was a poet and a republican, rejoicing in the almost paternal friendship of Lamar-tine. Every recollection of my youth brings back his name, and his poems. In that other world, under skies concealed by fewer clouds than ours, he guards a part of the affection he carried with him. His wife, whose esteem I value, buried herself for a long time in an almost hopeless grief, from which the vitality of her nature, gradually forced her. Her brightness

appeared even through her tears, and during her sojourn at Saint-Point, one could hardly tell which was the more dazzling, Mme. de Pierreclos, or Mme. de Girardin.

Mlle. Valentine, whose beauty unfolded a new enchantment every day, was already beginning her work of passionate devotion to her uncle, which continued unfaltering through his life, and has followed him beyond the tomb.

She would not permit Saint-Point to be sold at auction. She bought it in, with her small means, and preserves there the traditions of the old hospitality with so much grace, that when one sees her appear upon the piazza, in the pale light of the sun, he thinks, for a moment, that the family must follow, that the dead will leave their grassy mounds to welcome the guest as in days gone by.

M. 'd'Esgrigny made a place for himself among this illustrious company. He was so sympathetic, that a long conversation was necessary to perceive that his ideas were your mortal enemies. Veuillot has never been better defended, and with a good taste so unlike him, that we always came out of the controversies ashamed of having been charmed by a champion of the Society of Jesus. M. de Champeaux was frightfully distanced, and I felt obliged to fortify myself in my republican faith with M. Ronot, an enthusiastic comrade of Lamartine's, who concealed

a delicacy only equalled by his fidelity, under an attractive good nature.

He was one of those who loved Lamartine and Liberty, more than any thing else, and in whose friendship, Lamartine rejoiced for half a century. He had the happiness to die before the Empire, during the greatest expansion of the Lamartinian glory. His son, one of my dear friends, continues his father's qualities with much intelligence, and good sense. He has administered many times in our department as intermediate prefect.

As I have already said, Lafon and his daughter were among the guests. We could not explain how he had succeeded in enchanting a whole generation. Fanatics liking the Toulousian accent, even dared to place him as a rival to Talma. Without much urging, he used to recite to us, under the trees, interminable and somnolent harangues, which often came, alas ! from Racine, and Voltaire. He was only a pompous declaimer, with a warmth which had become reputation because it was a continuous flow.

The fact of his success remained, in spite of our impressions. He had drawn around him a host of admirers, for which the youth of the tragedian, and that of the public must have been the excuse. He appeared to be an excellent man, whose character was unspoiled by the mask that he was obliged to wear, and he was more proud of his daughter than of his own

fame. There was a smile of the innocent consciousness of a Watteau, on the lips of the daughter, and a charm of the seventeenth century in her toilettes. She painted with Mme. de Lamartine, but the ideal heads, delineated by her pencils, were, certainly, much less beautiful than her own.

Dr. Pascal was another occasional visitor. Lamartine often speaks of him in his writings, as the most intimate friend of his youth. He had had a duel with Toussenel, I believe, concerning an article in the "*Journal de Saône-et-Loire*." He was the firmest and most refined of all the republican circle. One day, Lamartine, knowing that he was sick and alone, invited him to come and die at Monceaux.

He did so.

I was thus, in the midst of genius, and beauty. The summer days were spent on horseback, or in the carriage, and the evenings filled with brilliant conversation and harmonious lyrics. Often, Lamartine took us for a walk after breakfast, to the shade of a fine forest, to the borders of a pond, on the slope of the mountain, which he still owned. Out of respect to his guests, he dressed himself with care, but his clothes soon lost their freshness, by contact with his climbing dogs and macaw.

One day, his costume presaged something unusual. Mme. de Lamartine anxiously awaited a revelation. We followed him along the path lead-

ing to the pond, but he turned aside in another direction.

"Where are you going, Alphonse," said Mme. de Lamartine.

"To one of the wonders of the world," he replied.

We descended at the right. The dogs preceded us, and were waiting, barking vociferously. At the angle of the road, were standing the two horses, harnessed to the carriage that Lamartine had brought from Vienna. The other horses, saddled for ladies and gentlemen, were pawing the ground impatiently. A vintage cart was laden with hampers, overflowing with hams, bread and waffles,

"What does this mean?" exclaimed Mme. de Lamartine.

"That we are going to lunch at Chateau-Tiers," replied her husband.

There was a sensation among the white dresses. They were not prepared for a ride on horseback, and the evenings in the valley, were always chilly. However, one could not very easily resist one of Lamartine's amiable fancies. He had foreseen the objection. Shawls and wraps filled up the cart; there was also a large bag of money. Our curiosity was much excited.

Was he going to announce the project of a long journey? And to what country? No one dared to ask.

He only half succeeded in forming his party.

Mme. de Pierreclos made a pretext of her mourning, for remaining behind. Mlle. Valentine pleaded a lesson, that she must give the children of Mme. de Lamartine's school.

Mme. de Lamartine, Mme. d'Esgrigny, Mlle. Lafon, and M. Ronot occupied the carriage. Lamartine mounted Sapphyr. Dr. Pascal, and I had our own horses, and after the saddles had been changed, Lafon and M. d'Esgrigny took the horses designed for the ladies, Lafon soon adapted his tragic dignity to the heavy movements of his Limousine steed. We followed the carriage as closely as possible. Lafon, having the hams before his eyes, talked of them with marked graciousness. It was a premeditated flattery. Lamartine loved to discuss the culinary art. The same lips, on which floated the most charming expressions, delighted in telling classic receipts. He developed his theory of hams, upon which he had meditated with the seriousness of Alexandre Dumas.

"I have arranged that receipt myself," said he, "and it will outlive 'Jocelyn.' It is exquisite. There are five or six poisons in the composition. Lady Stanhope gave me one of them, and I think that I brought another from Smyrna, it is the one that Mithridates abused so much, but it is quite harmless. Have you ever played Mithridates, Lafon? I will write a play for you, so that you may eat poison



every evening, and truly too, before an enthusiastic public."

"What do you call your poison," said Dr. Pascal, "Let me know, and, perhaps, I can explain the nervous malady existing in you."

"My poison will be public ingratitude," resumed Lamartine now becoming serious. "The people will raise me to the clouds, where Barthelemy says I now live, and then it will let me fall into its mud."

He was a clairvoyant, and has had a glimpse of the future. We respected his contemplation, and did not reply. He soon perceived that it was unseasonable, and rallied. M. d'Esgrigny like a man of good taste, was charmed with the profile Mlle. Lafon presented to us from time, to time, as the carriage turned in the road. Lafon responded, by praises of Mme. d'Esgrigny, which started a new topic. Lamartine approved, but not in a very cordial tone.

"I have never found true beauty, except in the Orient," said he. "Do not believe in the hyperboles of my poems. Do you know why it is more beautiful there, than elsewhere? Because it is combined with goodness. The races of the East are better than ours. They have not that quickness of intellect which makes the eyes sparkle, while it is incongruous with the lips. The women of the East wear the expression of their captivity; sadness in its supremest sense. They are only the flowers of pleas-

ure, and are swayed by all the breezes that waft you to them. I shall never forget my passage among the Grecian isles. My vessel was announced, and I was an emir there. The men came to meet me, in the boats, and the women, in their beautiful bare feet, gathered together on the river banks, while the young children hid among the fig-trees, and vines. What I breathed of peace, romance, and fancy, I could not tell in a poem of twelve thousand lines. There were daughters of Corfu, of Mount Tayjetto, of Cerigo, and of Cithera. My eyes will never see a more ravishing sight, even should they open in the Prophet's Paradise. Do not talk to me of the women of the West."

"But what of Elvira?" asked Mme. de Girardin, who had heard the conversation from the carriage, and whose feminine pride was touched.

"Alas! you have not been Elvira," said Lamartine in a low tone. "If you had been!"

"You would have had still more enthusiasm for the shepherdesses," replied Delphine.

We arrived at Chateau-Tiers.

We sought in vain for the promised marvel. There was a ruin of no positive character. The house, comparatively modern, was bounded by a landscape restricted and uncolored, like the Charolais generally. There was a wing of the Chateau, of the time of Louis XIV. a tower springing from the old

wall of the enclosure, and the remains of a French garden,—and nothing more.

We could not permit ourselves not to be charmed, and in fact, we were going to be.

Lamartine had a powerful motive for bringing us here and unloading the cart, for ordinarily, he had a horror of dinners on the grass. He chose a place in the corner of the orchard, pleasantly shaded by willow trees. The groom brought water from the well in the court, where there was a little farm-house built against the ruin. The china sparkled in the sun. The waffles had crumbled on the way, and were spread in golden fragments on the grass. Lamartine commenced carving the hams. A woman about fifty years of age, stout, and still handsome under the grey hair escaping from her cap, came out of the farm-house, bringing a great loaf of brown bread, and a jug of foaming milk. She saluted the company, but when with lowered eyes, she passed Lamartine, she blushed.

“Good morning, Janette. Do you not recognize me?”

“O, yes sir! but it is a long time since the *mignonette* faded,” she replied.

“And you live here with your children. How many have you?”

“Six,” said she with pride.

“Let us go and see the ruins. There is noth-

ing more to be seen here," interrupted Mme, de Lamartine, upon whose nerves this conversation grated.

"The ruins have their price," said M. Ronot, laughingly, to Dr. Pascal. "There is no need of disturbing ourselves," Lamartine rejoined dipping a piece of brown bread into his milk. "I want to tell you what I know about the chateau. My uncle, the abbé de Lamartine, often came here in his younger days, and he has told me a great deal about it. The fief was inherited by the beautiful Mlle. de Chateau-Tiers, who never married. She led a very gay life here. The nobility used to come, on their fine horses. Mass was celebrated every day, in the little chapel, which was on this side." . . . . .

"You know nothing of your ancient history," interrupted Mme. Girardin. "I have never heard of Chateau-Tiers, and consequently, I can tell better than you, what they did here, having for a foundation the prolonged celibacy of the noted beauty. Remain a Demosthenes, and do not try to be a Tallemant des Réaux, it is not your fate. If Mlle. Lafon will go in search of periwinkle, with Mme. d'Esgrigny, I shall feel more at liberty to talk, without fear of shocking their modesty."

"I converse with Veuillot, every day," said Mme. d'Esgrigny, "and my daughter never misses an evening of French Comedy."

"You will certainly never speak in that language, Madame," said Lafon.

"Well, then," resumed Mme. Girardin, "the summons to mass sounded every morning, in the chapel, and this is the way, they went to it. The little Chevalier de Berzé . . . is there a Berzé in your province, Lamartine?"

"There is."

"The little Chevalier had won twenty louis the night before at a game of cards, which was prolonged so late, that in the darkness he was deceived in finding his room, and unhappily was obliged to spend the night in Mlle. de Chateau-Tiers' vestibule, essentially incommoding the abbé de Lamartine, who was forced to cross the vestibule in the morning. We will notice, that this vestibule had only two doors, the one belonging to Mlle. de Chateau-Tiers, and the other that by which the Chevalier had entered. Mlle. de Chateau-Tiers, a little languishing, like a rose that had slept badly from having listened too long to a nightingale, appeared at the window, to powder her chesnut curls.

"The marquis of Pierreclos, who had been on the mountain to kill a hare, was resting under a pavilion. He was hunting for violets, and found a "femme-de-chambre." The horses, ready for the chase, were impatiently prancing in the stable-yard. The dogs were whining, and the horns had sounded. The

cooks were plucking the fowls. The little daughter of Père Mazoyer was coming up the path, leading her donkey, which bore the tithe belonging to Mlle. de Château-Tiers. Still the summons continued to sound, and go they must. They did not get there until after the elevation, which made the officiating priest swear.

"The marquis de Pierreclos took a chair next to Mlle. de Château-Tiers, and in a low tone, proposed marriage to her. Glancing at the said abbé de Lamartine, she refused. The abbé was talking in a still lower tone to the chevalier.

"What were you doing in the vestibule?"

"I was playing checkers, I had found a checker-board."

"Do you play with foils as well?"

"Certainly."

"Without guards?"

"Most assuredly,"

"Very well, then. At five o'clock behind the orchard wall."

"Agreed: but remember, if I draw a pint of blood from you, you will pass a night in the vestibule, and *only* there."

"And this is the way they heard mass at Château-Tiers, and I hope that M. Villemain will never again give me the Monthyon prize for the purity of my verse, if I have in the least overdrawn the picture."

Lamartine merely bowed. He hated an indelicacy or innuendo from the mouth of a lady, but this time his look was a little unjust, for Mme. de Girardin had related her story with a good deal of inspiration and eloquence.

He said ;

“ The seventeenth century was hardly responsible. It was an interregnum of God. The devil reigned.”

“ The devil was called Voltaire,” interrupted M. d’Esgrigny.

“ Or rather, Louis XV.” said Dr. Pascal.

Mme. de Girardin opened her beautiful eyes, in astonishment, upon Lamartine.

“ Do you believe in the devil?” she exclaimed.

“ A little. God, that is, Sovereign Reason, at that time, spoke only through two men, Rousseau and Voltaire, more especially through Rousseau, however. The spirit of evil was Master. When I weigh carefully, the injustices, the human monstrosities the subversion of morality, the absurdities of *true* history, I am persuaded that God, after that battle between good and evil, the result of which no one has ever known, abandoned several centuries of our planet to Satan, or Eblis, and that the men of that epoch were governed by laws emanating directly from evil. Lucifer was Secretary-of-State !”

“ But your theory is horribly blasphemous !” said Mme. de Lamartine.



“ Blasphemous! No! And what does it matter! Human speech cannot attain to God. He permits times of strongest temptations, but he meets out a recompense. Those who have fought the battle of life here, are gathered into another sphere after death, perhaps into a paradise. I do not know. Truth, the infallible light of order, and justice, appears to them for a season. Then, their eyes are closed again to this light, and they fall in other battles, and so, into other spheres, under other suns, with other trials and proofs, but always of work, which is the supreme law, and the highest happiness. God is no more eternal than man, but He is conscious of his Eternity. But I am wearying Mlle. Lafon, and we have wandered far away from Chateau-Tiers. Let us return.”

Then taking the arm of the pretty Mlle. Lafon, he led her across the broken walls. We went into the old garden, with the other ladies. Soon after, I escaped with my cigar into the old tennis court. There was a broken window looking out upon the farm yard and I heard Lamartine's voice. I had been sadly reflecting his last words, and for the first time in my life, was irritated with him. This concession to the existence of a devil, did not belong to him. Probably, it had been imposed upon him in his youth, by one of those charming Jesuits he speaks of in his “*Mémoires*,” and for whom he has altogether too much indulgence. He often alluded



to it afterwards, but I always observed that it was during his extreme sufferings. Not daring to accuse God, he created a devil out of respect, impossible as it was.

Even in the fertile and well-cultivated field of this great intellect, some of the enemy's tares had fallen.

I glanced out of the window into the farm-yard, Lamartine had taken the bag of money from the cart. The farmer's wife was standing near him.

"Hold up your apron, Janette, as you used to do when I threw the flowers."

This, then, was the Janette of his "*Mémoires*," the first rural love of the youth, at Milly.

Her eyes shone with tears as she looked at him. She was beautiful in the illumination of the past. She saw, again, the handsome young man from over the mountain, and heard, again, his promise, that her image alone should dwell in his heart. Holding up her apron, like one who had never known how to refuse him anything, she received the shower of silver that he poured into it. There must have been two thousand francs.

"This will buy the conscription of your son. Do not speak of it to any one, especially, Mme. de Lamartine." He bent down and touched the grey hair with his lips, as he had so often done, long years before. Then he walked away whistling to his dogs. The whole man was there. No one had ever been

more beloved than he. Every day there came letters full of declarations of love, to which we were obliged to reply. He conversed with all Europe.

His fame was an uninterrupted intoxication, and still, when his house was full of charming people, he had remembered this old love, living in the country. He had even dissimulated for the sake of helping her, and had pushed his flattery to that point, of asking her not to speak of the interview to Mme. de Lamartine.

## VI.

### *The "Bien Public."*

IT WAS a little while after this, that Lamartine desired to found a newspaper for himself. His political individuality was becoming the most important in the Assembly. His voice drew about him enthusiasts. He had already given his grand speeches upon the regency, the fortifications of Paris, and the abolition of capital punishment. His very whisper was causing a movement in the tide of public opinion. Outside of France, the world read Lamartine.

He did not want to establish a political organ in Paris, believing that his power would be more effective if he placed the tribune at a distance. He made the trial through me. Pelletan was starting the "XIX<sup>e</sup> Siecle," in Paris. Lamartine did not think it wise to write for the paper, but he liked Pelletan so much, that he proposed to me to undertake the responsibility of the authorship.

One day in November, while walking up and down the gallery, at Monceaux, he gave me an idea of an article upon the statesmen of the government of July.

In tracing the outline, he really gave me the whole article, and under the pretext of taking notes,

I wrote almost from his dazzling dictation. A week later, I carried the article to Pelletan, without indicating its source, as I had been commanded. Pelletan, doubtless, suspected its origin, and not to startle his readers by a too attractive decoy, had the courage to refuse it. He will know now, what associate he refused, and will forgive this historical indiscretion. It was Pelletan who afterwards gave Lamartine so many proofs of passionate devotion, and who has given to the religion of democracy so many testimonies of faith, and courage, and who, without ceasing to be entirely himself, re-appears in the spirit, eloquence, and courage of his son Camille Pelletan.

Lamartine wrote to me in August 1843, proposing the honor of being one of the founders of the "Bien Public."

He asked me to bring with me, my good neighbor Hippolyte Boussin, who subsequently entered deeply into the intimacy at Monceaux.

I was to find at Saint-Point, Bruys d'Ouilly; Champvans; Adolphe de La Tour, our judicious friend from Paris; Duréault, who had been deputy of the opposition; Garnier-Lacombe who suffered persecution during the Restoration; Versaud, an honorable merchant; and Charles Rolland, whom I did not then know, but who, in spite of his youth, was already talked of as Mayor of Mâcon. For the past twenty years, Rolland and I have walked in parallel

paths, and our hands have often met over the short distance between us, as our votes have mingled in the National Assembly, in spite of the almost imperceptible line of separation. I do not think that I have omitted to mention one of those men, who, fortifying each other for a work of democratic devotion, and foreseeing the Republic beyond those years still remaining of the reign of Louis Philippe, desired to unite their hopes in one indestructible bond.

Lamartine very rapidly unfolded his views. He did not have to persuade us. He did not hide from us the fact, that we were to create an annual necessity of pecuniary sacrifices, and made us see what was worth more than a little gold scattered by the way, the sentiment of Liberty that we should awaken in the hearts around us.

“What is the meaning of all these Revolutions for the last sixty years?” said he to us. “It is the pursuit of a single idea, and these changes are only the different phases of a single Revolution. France wants a rational government, that, without distinction of classes, calls to the conduct of power men who are most elevated by intelligence, and character. She wants a government that will spread its benefits over the entire society. She wants to apply to politics the doctrine of social charity. So long as this end is not attained, so long will Revolution follow its course, stormy or calm, according to the obstacles

or facilities it finds in its passage. Let us make a harbor, where she may deposit, not tumultuous ideas, but living truths, and upon their accretions, as on those of the Nile, we will cultivate the harvests of Liberty."

He continued talking in this way for a long time, always walking on the balcony, and sending his words to us through the windows of the salon. The oration was magnificent, and we had no need of interrupting it, for our resolutions had been taken in advance, and we voted unanimously for the foundation of the newspaper. Each of us took shares for a thousand francs, and Lamartine alone, ten thousand. It was evident, that this fund was only a prelude. But Lamartine was going to write for the paper. Editors were giving fifty thousand francs for a single work of his. His name seemed like an assured fortune, though he did not allude to it. As it will be seen, it proved our ruin.

Champvans, for the past year, had been on the editorial staff of the "*Journal de Saône-et-Loire*," where he proclaimed the policy of Lamartine. He was, therefore, appointed Editor-in-chief, and for three years acquitted himself ably and conscientiously. In 1848, he was recompensed by the prefecture of Ain, and elected representative. Soon after, he boldly accused Lamartine of forgetfulness, and to our utter consternation, went over to the re-

actionists. It will be unjust not to remember that he gave the best years of his life to truth, and I do not think it will be distasteful to him, since he has gone so far towards the shady horizon, if I recall to him so courageous and happy a period.

The "*Bien Public*," made a great sensation from its first appearance. All the newspapers reproduced the articles they recognized as Lamartine's, who, in this way, fed the whole press. I will give a few abstracts, which would have been an honor to any polemist, had he not happened, at the same time to be a poet, orator, historian and chief of the government.

September 23d, 1843, the Duke and Duchess of Nemours stopped at Mâcon. Lamartine gave an account of their visit, in a long article which he terminated thus,

"On the whole, the weather was very fine, the prince affable and modest, and the princess pleasing. The functionaries have been reserved in their expressions, the people, respectful, and public sentiment cold. Everybody did his duty, and nothing more. Yesterday morning, when at the salute of the cannon, the young travellers went on board the gaily decorated boat that was to take them to Lyons, nothing had changed the feeling. A prince and princess had passed. That was all. One carried away with him the esteem of thoughtful men, the other, the admiration of all who beheld her.



“But the situation is the same. The government, and the country are not especially affected, nor are they better understood.

“The river flows on, as it did the night before, and Time is going where it went yesterday.”

In replying to “*La Réforme*,” Lamartine wrote under one of his oratorical inspirations.

“If the National Assembly could come out of its grave to-day, and find itself in the presence of its work, thus disfigured, who is there among its statesman, who would recognize the Revolution in your hands? From reaction to reaction; from corruption to corruption; from fear to fear; from pretext to pretext; what principle have you left standing? Instead of democracy, an oligarchy; instead of equality, an electoral nobility; instead of a magisterial royalty, a dynastic royalty; instead of the free press, the laws of September; instead of association, prohibition to assemble; instead of an emancipated religion living from the altar, religious quarrels, and denominations disputing for the budget; instead of properties divisible to infinity, properties of mortmain, increasing every day in the hands of corporations, and disinheriting families; instead of labor, and free industries, France is sold to capitalists; instead of the moral and movable supremacy of intelligence, the supremacy of imposts and the sovereignty of the glebe and patent!”



In an apostrophe to "La Réforme," of October, 26, 1843, he writes,

"The French Revolution is a good spiritualism in action ; its work is to substitute everywhere, mind for matter, right for force, putting *man*, where the ancients put *things*. The Revolution is an outflow from a Christian source. Those who see it in a Constituent Assembly ; those who see it only in the Convention ; those who would like to see it only in the Institutions of July, are equally mistaken. Its first name was Liberty ; its second was Equality ; and its last shall be Charity. The Constituent Assembly is only its principle ; the Convention is only its Anger, and the Government of July shall be its repentance. Will "La Reforme" understand this? "

Five years later, the editor, to whom Lamartine had thus replied, was his friend and colleague in the Provisionary Government, and Lamartine was often obliged to reassure the republican faith of this honest man, who was alarmed by the clamors of the riots, which he thought were incompatible with universal suffrage.

It was in August 1844, that the "Bien Public" recounted the little episode of abbé Thyons. Champvans, who has since then prostrated himself before the church, had not then taken up arms against her for the first time. He could, therefore, meet the curé of Chânes with a clear conscience, and true disinter-

estedness. Lamartine's articles upon the State, the Church and Instruction were inflaming public opinion. The Bishop of Autun, to counter-balance the influence of these, demanded letters of adhesion from his clergy. There is no doubt, but that Champvans counselled his friend to refuse his signature. The priest listened to his advice, and wrote to the Bishop. The eloquent letter had undoubtedly been attentively read by Lamartine, and this is the preface that Champvans gave in his Journal. "The Bishops have *exacted* adhesion from their Clergy. We say *designedly*, *exacted*, for evidently, the Bishop holding in his hand the fortunes and honor of his inferior Clergy; the Bishop, possessing the unheard-of, the unreasonable, and iniquitous right of discharging, revoking, and interdicting, according to his good pleasure, will obtain as many signatures as he desires, except from such honorable and courageous examples, as we signalize here. The letter of M. Thyons throws a ray of light upon one side of the great question, the separation of Instruction from the Church and State."

The letter will be read with the interest that a man excites, who exposes himself to attack in order to preserve his dignity as a man, and priest.

The letter from abbé Thyons, to the Bishop of Autun.

"Monseigneur :—

"There are two things in what you ask of me, a political act and an act of agreement, as there are in me two men, the priest and the citizen. As a priest, I am submissive to you ; as a citizen, I am answerable to my conscience only.

"I am not convinced, Monseigneur, that this Episcopal manifestation, this enrolment of opinions, this crusade of signatures, can have any good result. It has too much the appearance of an assault on public opinion.

"There remains only *one* of two things ; the adhesion that you demand of me is free, or it is imperative. If it is free, my conscience forbids me to give it to you ; if it is imperative, it has no value.

"Under these circumstances, to my great regret, I find that I must refuse my signature."

This letter, and many others that followed, made a great noise at Sion. The "*Siècle*," and the "*Nationale*," and all the liberal papers, copied it. Abbé Thyons seemed to have breathed the atmosphere of "*Jocelyn*." His popularity became such, that the Bishop thought it his duty to strike him with an interdict.

Lamartine, Champvans, M. de Saint-Ildefonse and I went to see him in his disgrace. He gave us the welcome of his table and his mind. He appeared to me prodigiously inferior to what he had written. Who had helped him? It was not the dead Rous-

seau, not the living Champvans, who had not the power of managing the philosophical language to that degree. M. de Lamartine never divulged the name of the poor curé's helper. Lamartine's protection and Champvans' friendship continued faithful. After having tried to write a book, that was to resemble the "Confessions of Jean Jacques," the abbé was nominated Consul at Bucharest. The reaction soon drove him from there, he came back to his own country, poor, and was again aided by Lamartine. He had the weakness to retract, and ask for bread from the church, who rewarded him by a curé of the fourth order. Here he died with the double remorse of having betrayed his apostolate, without possessing the moral strength to sanctify it by martyrdom, and, finally, was himself betrayed.

The "Bien Public" continued conspicuous for five years. Lamartine shed a light over all its questions, by his own fire. It is impossible to choose from these articles, they were so remarkable that I should have to tell of all.

Charles Rolland, Boussin, and I, had the honor of writing often for the paper. Its action was not confined to the department. It would have been one of the batteries, giving the hardest blows to the Establishment of July, if it had not been, first of all, an instrument of peace and civilization, preparing the way and the philosophy of the Republic of 1848.

It exerted an indisputable influence, indirectly, among its founders. It was the excuse for a reunion every year, meeting at different places. Once we met at Saint Gengoux and at Sercy at M. Duréault's the old deputy; at Rolland's in Mâcon, at Garnier Lacombés and finally at my house at Cormatin.

Lamartine's presence always caused a great excitement. All the surrounding population came to see and hear him. How many magnificent speeches were given in the villages and applauded by the honest hands of laborers and vintagers! How many generous thoughts were uttered, and perhaps only half comprehended, but which ameliorated the condition of the people by the simple fragments a man could carry home to his family!

At first the new doctrine, meeting the inherent force of the Napoleonic traditions, caused wonder and surprise, but little by little, the fruit ripened in the shade. The great teachings of the lettered Republicans of our generation, transmitted from father to son, have at last been understood by the people, and the result shows in the almost unanimous republican vote in our department to-day.

At each of our meetings, we noticed an increase of receipts, by subscription, and also a much greater increase of our expenses. This explained itself. Every time that Lamartine inserted an article, he increased the issue ten fold, and sent copies to all parts

of the world. We could not put a money value upon this dissemination of the good word. We willingly sacrificed our patrimony, for the sake of recruiting citizens, for the future Republic. There never was a company of shareholders, who ruined themselves with more enthusiasm.

I remember what Lamartine said to me, one day after we had discussed our deficit.

“Let us reflect upon this. May we not here experience a legitimate sense of satisfaction and self-gratulation? While most men in their enterprises have for their principal, or secondary object, the increase of their capital, and division of large receipts among themselves; while their reimbursements come from exclusively industrial transactions; while they put into their safes, the tithe of their stock, the scum of their brokerages, and, finally the more or less open subsidies, which the Budget of State, with an attempt at concealment, has constantly slipped into the hands of those, whose consciences and opinions, are as flexible as their pens;—is it not consoling to see persons, possessing disinterested ideas and opinions not only scorn all corrupt prosperity, but even willingly impose onerous taxes upon themselves, and,—as it were—pay their own ransoms with their mites, for the sake of being independent, of remaining entirely and essentially national, and of diffusing—as far as lies in their power—to the most remote and inhospita-



ble corner of the country, a policy, conducive to the material interests of the departments, and to the social interest of entire France?"

The "Bien Public," cost Lamartine more than fifteen thousand francs a year. It was one of those unseen graves, where a part of his fortune was buried for common safety, that fortune, so often made and unmade, spent charitably and democratically for the country, and which the country could not restore.

The Republic, whose outline the worthy journal had sketched so long beforehand, was the final cause of its disappearance from Mâcon. Lamartine, having fallen so abruptly from power, needed a newspaper at Paris to explain his policy, so he continued his title to this one. Pelletan and La Guernoniere worked brilliantly for it under Lamartine's direction, and Pelletan learned that disinterestedness and conscientiousness of politics, which gave so much power to his talent and character in the National Assembly, and La Guernoniere learned that maturity of style, and graceful manner, which made him sympathetic and eloquent, even after he became senator of the Empire.

The "Bien Public," whose honest title has been repeated in France and other countries, formed a generation of citizens invincibly devoted to the Republic as the only source of Liberty. If any one has departed from the great principle, he must still look

back with pride upon those warm seasons of struggle and generous thought. Our coöperation, brought us all under one master, unequalled in gentleness and genius, and gave us a deeper insight into the best heart that God ever made.

The "Bien Public" grouped a phalanx of disciples around a modern Plato, who sent out to the mountains and vines of the Maconnais as many discourses as ever died away on the billows of the Pireæ. His language was a model of the French, and he will remain the catechism of the Republican religion. If, of all Lamartine's great works, there had survived only the "Bien Public," it would have left a train of light crossing his century and losing itself in the dawn of the new Republic.



## VII.

### *Monceaux.*

I HAVE not yet spoken of Monceaux, where Lamartine spent the autumn, and early winter and where he carried us with him. The most moving scenes of his political, as well as his private life, unfolded there. Monceaux was more truly the home of the politician, the counsel general, the host of all European celebrities, than Saint-Point, still the *man* did not disappear in the vortex.

The chateau at Monceaux, and its surrounding vineyards, which, during the last years, were the only remains of his fortune, had been given to Lamartine by an uncle, M. de Lamartine senior, who was a Voltairian even after becoming a royalist in 1815. He was a handsome old man, a savant, rich, and consequently an autocrat, who held the youth of the poet under the despotic rod, more menacing than effective, of family. No sale of wines was ever made, no journey undertaken, no marriage projected, without the authority of this chief of the clan. In his "Mémoires," Lamartine speaks of him with a respectful horror, mingled with pity. One would have to live in a province, and in a family where there was

one such member, to have an idea of the autocratic power of Louis XIV.

The chateau at Monceaux was begun under that reign and finished in all the florid style of the Pompadour. There is a large façade, with a pavilion on each side ; a little court where there is a chapel ; an avenue of chestnuts, and the terrace running down to the grape vines, formed the only garden. M<sup>me</sup>. de Lamartine had built two small English houses at the entrance, and had planted an avenue of walnut trees, which went through the vines to meet the terrace. In spite of all our entreaties, Lamartine had these beautiful trees cut down, as they shaded the vines too much, for it was from them that he expected to free himself from embarrassment. He only looked upon Monceaux as his living.

The landscape was at Saint-Point, though that at Monceaux was not to be despised. From the terrace on a clear bright day, one could see the lofty snowy summit of Mont Blanc beyond the mountains of Beaujolais. The eye rested only upon richness and fertility. In the house there had once been a large hall for a theatre, where the young nobles and canons of the eighteenth century used to meet. Lamartine converted this into a gallery, where he spent most of his time.

How many lamps were lighted there, how many chibouques smoked, and how many brilliant talks

those long walls have heard ! Alas ! the lamps are extinguished, the fragrant odors ascend no more, the loving words have ceased ! We are in the way here, we have outlived all these joyous scenes !

I cannot recall Monceaux without a sense of perfumed warmth. .

The reception rooms, extending to the right and left, occupying the entire first story, were always brightened by clear, open fires. The heaters were only for the corridors. At a door in the middle of the gallery, was a "bénitier," representing three angels, sculptured by Mme. de Lamartine from a model, still to be found at St. Germain l'Auxerrois.

There was a continued coming and going of guests. Their silken robes rustled in the halls. The sabots of the vintagers, mounting the wooden staircase leading to Lamartine's cabinet, had a peaceful and rural sound.

The chateau had a southern exposure, and was never enveloped in the mists of the valley, and the sun always shone on the terrace. It was bright there, even on a rainy day.

Some of the visitors came regularly every year, and remained several months. M. and Mme. Dargaud spent November and December there, which was never too long. Dargaud has left a name as writer and philosopher. Born in the department of Paray-le-Monial, educated in the same manner as Edgar

Quinet, he commenced life early as a man of letters, and has never been misunderstood. Among other things he has written a fine study upon "Marie Stuart," a dramatic history of religious liberty, "Life of Queen Elizabeth," and "La Famille," where each page gives an exquisite scene of provincial life.

He has left a manuscript work upon Lamartine, much better than mine. Mme. Dargaud aided him in his literary work. He is dead. She is blind. She lives in a night brightened by many memories, and she still composes verses, which she writes between bars, like the blind at *Quinze Vingt*. She has descended into old age, with a mind calm and firm in the face of an inevitable misfortune, but with more light in her blindness than many have who see clearly.

Dargaud worshipped Lamartine as much as any of us. His intimacy commenced at an earlier period than mine. He was our resource after dinner, when Lamartine, with his feet stretched out on the hearth before the fire, was taking his daily nap.

Then Dargaud would shake himself solemnly, and out came a myriad of anecdotes, told rather slowly, but always in an agreeable manner. Lamartine would arouse, and continue them until bedtime.

Dargaud was a man for a philosophical walk. Every once in a while, he would halt, and his companion was obliged to do the same. In cold weather,

this was not so agreeable. In order to more surely retain one, he would take him, resolutely, by the button of his overcoat. But his conversation was attractive, and we rarely left the button in his hand, so that if we took cold—we at least, saved our politeness, and our overcoats.

Louis de Ronchaud used to come to all the fêtes of St. Martin. I love him too much not to speak of him. He has devoted his life to poetry, art, politics, and to the Republic. He has sculptured a marvellous study of Phidias, like one of the marbles of the Parthenon, which gave him the honor of an entire number of the "*Cours de Littérature*." He has written some fine dramas for himself, and some noble verses for the reviews.

Assisted by Dumesnil, the talented son-in-law of Michelet, he is now revising a complete edition of Lamartine's works. The revision could not be done under more auspicious circumstances, nor by more loving, and appreciative hands. This is what the public knows, or will know of Louis Ronchaud, but it will still be ignorant of the almost heroic part that he has taken in democracy militant, for the last thirty years.

M. Grévy, who presides over the National Assembly to day, perhaps because he is the most honest man, has a sincere and enduring friendship for Louis Ronchaud.

This tells a whole story.

There is one more sympathetic face of the circle at Monceaux. Every year at almost the same time, just as the fogs had reached the lower vines, we saw a little carriage coming up the avenue, in which was shaking backward and forward, a great grey hat on the back of a head, and we said. "It is the *gentleman*."

"The gentleman" responded, and happily for his friends still responds, to the name of J. B. Desplaces.

He had lived ten or fifteen years in England, and brought back with him, English habits and English whiskers.

He edited in London, the French journal, "Le Courrier de l'Europe." He belonged to an obscure but upright family of the suburbs of Mâcon. He was self-made, and chose the best models. Having visited much in London society, he could speak English with Mme. de Lamartine, and related agreeably all the commercial and diplomatic chronicles of the metropolis. He was as well versed in questions of fine art as in financial questions. Upon those, especially, he gave Lamartine most excellent advice, which was never followed.

When Lamartine's ruin was inevitable and the unhappy question of national subscription was raised, to which I shall refer bye-and-bye, M. Desplaces begged Lamartine to allow him to go to America to see

what could be done there. This was a few years after 1848, and Desplace felt certain, that the great Republic of the United States, would hold it an honor to aid one, who had proclaimed the same form of government in France.

Desplaces departed. He was gone eighteen months, and his mission was almost fruitless. The great coffers of New York and Washington did not open for an unfortunate, so far away. If Lamartine had shown himself in person, and had given a series of lectures, he would have brought back a whole Mississippi of dollars. Practical business men could not forgive him for not coming to see them. They could not see the civilizing side of Lamartine's mission.

Desplaces held conferences in vain, where nothing was lacking that could persuade. The subscribers belonged chiefly to the Southern States, or to the Latin race, who understood the "Meditations."

Desplaces could not console himself for not bringing back a million by the sale of books alone, as that was his object more than to raise a subscription. He felt ashamed of the American indifference, and believed himself in some way responsible for the littleness of a great people. His disappointment only increased his friendship for Lamartine, and Lamartine's for him. Lamartine never allowed him to see that he had counted upon a success.



Desplaces consecrated himself to philosophy and liberalism.

To-day he is one of the most fervent apostles of the republican, and anti-clerical cause among us.

M. and Mme. Adam Salomon were most welcome guests.

Salomon could be pardoned for being a photographer, because in his pictures, he did not forget that he was an artist. Mme. Salomon devoted herself to charitable work in the Israelite world, as Mme. de Lamartine, in the Catholic. The hours that she spared us from her work were always full of charm, and always too short.

I am embarrassed in speaking of the grace, and intellect of those I name, but Lamartine could only have about him people of intelligence, to whom he made few exceptions, myself for example—

A most entertaining and dear friend was Edmond Texier, who brought there his three young daughters. They had the honor of playing their youthful comedies, in which they put so much talent, and naïveté, that Lamartine, who generally did not care much for the theatre, unless there was a farce, was sincerely amused.

One of the flatteries of Adolphe de La Tour, was to reserve a box at the "Variétés" for Lamartine. Odry and Arnal were his heroes. As for Texier, I shall tell nothing new in saying that his wild, unsatis-



fied, Bohemian, and at the same time, classic imagination made him an inexhaustible joy for his auditors. He had an unknown side of tenderness, which Lamartine discovered and appreciated.

“Do not ask a favor of Texier,” said Lamartine to me, “he is so good, that he promises all, without realizing it. It is not forgetfulness. His generosity makes him guarantee impossibilities. He would compromise himself by his kindness.”

Texier did not only bring his own wit to Monceaux, but he brought forth a new light in Lamartine. We had often seen the flashes of the lightnings in our familiar intercourse, but they were lost in the power of his philosophy and eloquence. When Texier was there, we had an amusing Lamartine. He was transformed into Voltaire. He would make us laugh for hours. Laugh! It was really that, and with what abandon!

One evening, after the young ladies had gone to bed, he proposed to read one of the tales of Boccaccio to us. We were enchanted at the unexpectedness of the proposition, though none of us would have dared to confess that he could not understand Italian without a dictionary. Lamartine had talked with Graziella, and in spite of his northern birth, had an oriental and meridional genius. He could have spoken in the Parliament at Florence, or in a Conclave at Rome, with equal ease.

He went to get the book, and showed us that he had bought it at a Venetian Cardinal's sale.

Dargaud who did not understand Italian, thought the distraction was hardly worth the while.

"It is not a translation then," he said.

"I have never had but one translation, that is yours of the book of Job."

"You are very kind."

"Apropos, Dargaud, you speak Hebrew of course?"

"Seldom, there is a Latin edition of 1735.

Dargaud felt the necessity of changing the conversation.

"If you would be so kind as to read us a tale from Voltaire," he replied,

"The ladies are here, and there is more sentiment in Boccaccio."

So, bravely putting on his spectacles, which was a great concession, for he was not ignorant of the magnetism of his eyes, Lamartine took his seat under the light, and opened his book.

"It was so small, that the cardinal used to take it into the confessional, and read, while he was listening to an old dowager."

Lamartine did not think of sleeping that night. His eyes sparkled under the glasses, his gestures took forms we had never seen before. He read in French,

without destroying the vivacity of the verse by his translation, one of the most marvellous tales, in which there were twenty characters, and where sparkling epigrams and daring thoughts were silvered in Italian grace. By closing our eyes, we could almost have sworn, that we were at a representation of the "Comédie Française." His voice changed at each speaker. Sometimes it was the nasal tones of an old "procureur" of the Margellina, at Naples, or the hoarse voice of a soldier, or the flute-like tones of a love-sick signorina. The intonations were so marked, that we seemed to see the actors. He laughed, he cried, he grimaced, he transported us into gallant Italy of the fourteenth century. The Fiametta and Filomela defiled before us in their unknotted mantles, and sat down on the grassy mound to the music of castanets, and guitar. The water from the fountains fell from step to step; compliments flowed from mouth, to mouth; the prior sat before a bountiful repast; the shops of Boulogne resounded with gossip; the palaces lifted the curtains of their alcoves, and a perpetual joy pervaded every picture.

The reading, or rather the representation, lasted two hours. We were exhausted with delight. Lamartine, then on the pinnacle of popularity, with a nature grave and sad, became again a young man, joyous by his age, and melancholy by his talent, who

had listened to Pasquino at Rome, and had met with all sorts of adventures.

As Ossian had put on the gown of the "Malade Imaginaire," or Byron had sung an impromptu song at the "fête de Piedegrotta."

Lamartine did not go to bed that night until eleven o'clock, an event which never happened, except during the revolutionary nights of the Hotel-de-Ville.

He did not dream of his dignity, scarcely of his majesty. It was an hour of forgetfulness and improvisation, and all because his own nature was so simple, and he saw that his good-will brought tears of gratitude to our eyes.

Since then, I have looked for the text of that tale, and have only found the framework. Without one of us suspecting it, Lamartine had added more than three quarters, with such a delicacy of assimilation, that Fiametta would have found no fault. So, after that evening, whenever he said to me that he ought to have been a financier, I never protested, even mentally. He had made himself a great comedian, and what more might he not have done?

I do not desire to conceal anything of his character. I must show how hard he was one day, he, who was always so good, and so courteous. Every touch given to this great statue, must be precise.

One evening in September 1846, I was going to Monceaux unexpectedly. By way of explanation, let me say, that Lamartine, imagining that we might be assailed by requests, had positively forbidden us presenting any one, no matter who, to him, without warning, leaving us to suppose that he hated new faces. Just as I was turning below the terrace, I saw gestures on the horizon, and a tall man approached me, making demonstrations of great joy. I recognized X. I had not seen him for fifteen years.

He had been my classmate at college, and we had passed an adventurous youth together. As a young man, he had a savor of Creole fancy, and to his friends was as romantic as a hero of Hoffman. He had been sent to conduct a ministerial newspaper in the province, where duels were fought to sustain a subprefect. He subsequently founded a diplomatic review, and though he received a government subsidy, he preserved his independence.

One morning M. Guizot reproached him for a journey he had taken under false direction.

"What will you have, M. le Ministre," said he "I will call it my trip to Gand."

One night, on his way home with some friends, passing through rue Saint-Benoit, he went into a grocer's, and bought a piece of chalk, then stopping before the office of the "*Revue des Deux-Mondes*," he wrote in great capitals on the door.

"Buloz! Beware of the ides of March!" (*idées de Mars*) M. de Mars was M. Buloz' secretary and proof-reader who had put too many punctuation marks in one of X's articles.

I was astonished to meet him at Monceaux.

"What are you doing here?" I exclaimed.  
"Have you come from Lamartine?"

"Alas! No. I was passing through Mâcon, and I never should have forgiven myself if I had not seen the house of this great man, so I have walked out. It is nearly six o'clock, and I have not been to dinner."

I shuddered, for I saw what was expected of me. A matter of great importance compelled me to see Lamartine that night, or I should have proposed going back to Mâcon.

"You know Lamartine very well," said he.

It was impossible to deny it, my relations with him are too public. I did not reply.

He continued;

"Present me to him."

The blow was struck. I felt a pity for my poor comrade, with whom I had had so many pleasant associations, and could not bear to think that after turning aside from a journey purposely to see Lamartine, he was to be disappointed, when I had only to open the door.

"It is very late," I said.

"It is dinner time." X. replied in a sad tone.

Clearly, there was no deception. The visit was made in good faith, He could not have foreseen my arrival and nothing but admiration had brought him there.

"Let me tell M. de Lamartine of his good fortune, and get into my carriage while waiting."

We were in the court. Affairs were getting a little complicated. The servant told me that there were many guests. I entered. The gallery was full. There were friends and strangers too, all in evening dress. Lamartine welcomed me with his habitual expression of happy surprise.

"The house is overflowing. You will have to sleep in the library," said he.

I drew him aside into the bay-window, and explained my perplexities. His face grew severe.

He was the recognized leader of the opposition.

"X.?" said he "One of Guizot's spies."

He calumniated X. although he did not attach to the word "spies" its ordinary meaning.

I tried to pacify him, saying that the encounter was entirely unforeseen, and that the poor fellow had been looking disconsolately at the illustrious roof for the last two hours.

"Bring him in," said he, finally.

I went away dissatisfied. "X. will have a poor idea of my credit with Lamartine," I thought, "he



will write to the newspapers that his hospitality is decidedly over-rated."

I met Champvans at the foot of the stairs, and told him my story.

"I would not like to be in your place," said he, leaving me hastily.

I indulged the secret hope that reflection, and native kindness, would accomplish their work. I did not tell X. of the cloud. I introduced him. Every body was looking at us. Lamartine had told. He was more than cold, he was haughty. He did not ask a question. He confined himself to generalities, and started off in an invective against the ministry. X. was disconcerted. Perhaps, he was thinking of Hugo's "*Danube en Colère.*"

The clock struck the hour for dinner. There was no allusion. Lamartine said that he needed me for the next fortnight.

Mme. de Lamartine, who saw my discomfiture, stepped forward to ameliorate X's condition.

Her husband stopped her, with a slight gesture. X. was generally very prompt to act, but now he could not find a word to say. It might not have helped much; however, he would not have appeared so much like an idiot. The dinner bell sounded, I took X. by the arm, determined to take him back to Mâcon, and present him to my father for compensation; Lamartine divined my intention.



"You will take Mme. de M., to dinner," said he, loud enough to mark the exclusion.

To let X. go, was to give a lesson. I had my horse re-harnessed, and ordered the man to take my friend back to Mâcon. I cannot remember all the excuses that I invented. I have never seen him since. If he ever reads this, he will know what I suffered.

I pouted a little that evening. Lamartine redoubled his favors. He made me recite poetry, and thanked me a dozen times for coming. Under such treatment the slight wound to the heart was quickly cicatrized. Still, I felt that I had cause for complaint, and the next day, I said to him,

"You were cruel yesterday."

"I do not belong to myself," he replied. "If X. had dined with me, all Europe would have said that I accepted the ministry. Politics is more tyrannical than the Empress of Russia. But I really like the young man. Let us go and see him at his hotel at Mâcon.

"He went away this morning."

"Lacretelle," said he, "if ever he wants a note of a thousand francs—whisper to me."

"He would rather have a good word." I replied, in order to raise my companion in his estimation, and still speak the truth.

X., never received the note, nor the good word

He had a heart without resentment, and showed a generous forgetfulness. All he said to the Divan Le Pelletier, was, that Lamartine was a Jacobin.

He has since become rich, and he nobly revenged himself, by adding his name to the Lamartine subscription. I did not have another occasion for many years, to find fault with the bad temper and cruelty of this courteous man. Lamartine was Chateaubriand only on that day.

## VIII.

### *The Banquet at Mâcon.*

IN the meantime, during a period of two years, "Les Girondins," had been appearing, at intervals of three months. This great work, recounting the history of a past Revolution, and containing the germs of a future Revolution, caused unprecedented excitement, which, like a fire, died away, only to rekindle at the publication of each successive volume. Lamartine the greatest poet, and one of the most powerful forces at the tribune in moving the Assembly, now revealed himself as the most pathetic of historians. By one of those curious transformations, which authors frequently produce, Robespierre, though not deprived of his robe of blood, surpasses in interest the Girondists, who are the true heroes. Who could imagine it?

Lamartine was attracted by the austerity of his habits, and by the bold sincerity of that spiritualism which drew upon him the hatred of the Atheists of the 9th Thermidor. This rehabilitation of a character so universally detested, conflicted with public sentiment. The royalists pursued Lamartine, night and day. The philosophers, alone, pardoned him.

These opposing sentiments only stimulated the success of the work, which continued to fascinate like a romance, and was committed to memory like the Annals of Tacitus.

Historical style was clothed in new colors ; that inexhaustible genius expanded, crystallizing in the imagination like waves of marble. No one could doubt the facts presented in those stirring pages, and through them, the heart of the people was directed immediately towards the Revolution. It was clear, that the first word pronounced, would be : Republic !

Enemies, and superficial thinkers have claimed that " Les Girondins " could not be classed among *serious* works. Perhaps, because the reader never wearies. Can it be possible that a history, whose editions have multiplied without number, and which has been the means of obliterating a dynasty, is *not* a serious work ? The army that surrenders ; the king who takes flight ; the barricades that rise ; the National Guard, that with one voice proclaim, " Long live Reform," and all this, because the ideas concentrated in some *eight* volumes of history, have germinated in their hearts ; is this not *serious* ?

Search the chronicles of the people and the libraries of nations, and how many books will you find, beginning in the enthusiasm of the people and ending in such scenes as that at the Hotel-de-Ville, where the red flag of communism is trampled under foot,

capital punishment abolished, and where Eternal Truth, and the Republic are proclaimed. I might almost say, that I saw Lamartine write "*Les Girondins*." He was preparing for the work, by visiting the country and the houses he was to depict; collecting about him the survivors of that great epoch, as well as the letters, and contemporaneous newspapers. He went to the house of Mme. Roland, near Ville-Franche; to that of Charlotte Corday's aunt, in Normandy; to the cellars of Marat, and to Robespierre's apartments in rue St. Honoré, Paris. He conversed with Danton's widow; and an old friend of Fouquier Thiville, for he had a few, came to give some information in regard to the "procureur" of the guillotine.

"And what kind of a man was he?" asked Lamartine.

"A charming person, always merry!" replied the friend.

After Lamartine had made sufficient inquiries; after he had revived his characters and, as it were, listened to their voices, filled with his subject, fresh from its sources, he wrote with prodigious facility and rapidity, never dictating until towards the latter part of his life.

He planned a journey into Brittany for material, in view of a special volume regarding the War of the Vendée. February intervened. The journey was

not taken and the volume was never written. Lamartine received four hundred thousand francs for the manuscript of "*Les Girondins*," and the editor made a fortune out of it.

The excitement at Mâcon was so intense, that we felt the necessity of some special demonstration. What should it be? Public meetings were forbidden, The prefects closed their eyes upon banquets, so a banquet was decided upon, in July, 1847.

A committee was chosen, and the duties divided. They were easy to accomplish, for public opinion was not only favorable, but urgent. The Republicans wanted to know their strength. Not a word was to be said, but the idea was apparent even under this imposed silence.

An immense space was prepared, for we were to receive an entire population. Delegates from twenty departments were expected. The government felt that there was a battle of words in preparation against it. It did not dare, openly, to put a gag into the mouth of such an agitator, but we did not doubt that difficulties would be invented, and traps set for us.

Lamartine did not forget that he had been a diplomat. He offered the presidency of the banquet to M. Delmas, prefect of Saône-et-Loire. This was ingenious, for the prefect could not accept, and by declining the honor of presiding over a meeting, he

admitted the possibility of it, and his letter became an authorization. After all, how could he prevent an homage offered to a literary work, and treat the author of "*Les Meditations*" as an insurgent?

The presidency was given to our friend Charles Rolland, who though very young, was then Mayor of Mâcon. The following notice appeared in the "*Bien Public*." "In a few days, two thousand of our citizens will unite in a friendly banquet, celebrating the triumph of the most remarkable historian of our day. Among them will be men of great talent, and noble character, and none but friends of Order."

And again ;

"The banquet is decidedly fixed for Sunday, July eighteenth, at four o'clock in the afternoon. Those desiring to take part, are requested to address one of the one hundred and twenty members of the committee designated.

"The price of subscription is five francs. Each subscriber will have the privilege of presenting one or more ladies."

Again on the thirteenth was another notice :

"The committee trust exclusively to the public sentiment for the maintenance of order and dignity on this occasion. Such a gathering has no recommendation except in itself. Its discipline results from its seriousness, and from the solemnity of the patriotic act that is to be accomplished."



We proceeded prudently, and by degrees, and when the affair was too far advanced to be suppressed by the government, without violence, we gave to it a political character.

July 18th was a hot day at Mâcon, and six thousand visitors from other cities, sought in vain for a refreshing breath in the burning streets. The department of Saône-et-Loire sent all its disengaged population. There were deputations from sixty cities. Railroads were not known here, at that time, and innumerable carriages and omnibuses followed in rapid succession, over the dusty roads, through crowds of peasants bringing their children to see the spectacle.

The space chosen, on the right bank of the Saône, covered more than a hectare, (13.000 sq. yds.). It was a long parallelogram, where five hundred tables, shining with white linen, were sheltered from the sun by awnings and tents. On the four sides were elevated seats, for the accommodation of spectators. At the end was a table higher than the others for Lamartine, and a platform for the authorities.

I had come from Cormatin, leading a caravan of queer vehicles, and every conceivable animal for riding. Every cart and donkey had twice its load. We were pilgrims, going to worship at the Mecca of Genius. I wore my committee badge. Léon Bruys surpassed himself in introducing the fair sex.

This was one of the last exhibitions of the Mâcon-



nais. The wives of wealthy farmers, brought out from their closets their rich silk costumes, and coifs of lace, which had passed from mother to daughter, since the days of Margaret of Savoy. The Enamels of Bourg were displayed, and necklaces, and golden crosses sparkled in the sunlight. Six thousand spectators occupied the elevated seats. There were journalists from Paris and elsewhere, peasants in blouses, priests in robes, workmen in jackets, young girls in summer finery, gentlemen from the cities in fashionable attire, soldiers on the wing, and foreigners who had turned aside from their journey to see a French meeting. All were eagerly questioning each other, gesticulating, perspiring, and expectant, as if there were to be a revelation. And the monstrous meat-pies, and the corks bursting from the bottles, letting out a flood of rich red wine; the thousand flags unfolding to the breeze; the cries of fright from the throng, crowding upon each other; the cries of joy of friends meeting each other; the greetings, the stamping feet, the merry laughs, and the confused clamors, the great respect in this patriotic intoxication, the sanctity, one might almost call it, in the tumult, were a reminiscence of the Federation at the Champ-de-Mars. And all these movements—all these hopes, marking a time exceptional in the festivals of the people, was the prologue of a day historic in the Annals of Mâcon.

"A Roman Coliseum—but a Coliseum living and popular." Lamartine said to us afterwards.

The curtain was about to rise, when a grotesque episode changed the weariness of waiting into hilarity. Four young waiters appeared on the scene, bearing majestically towards the table of honor, *a calf*, roasted whole.

It was Homeric, certainly, but only imposing in the Iliad. M. Calvert-Rognat, our worthy caterer, thus anticipated the Empire of which it was symbolic, beginning with an *Eagle* and ending with a *calf*.

Four o'clock was sounding from old St. Vincent, when Lamartine appeared with his municipal escort. He was dressed in black, and was very pale, but it was the pallor of joy, a compensation for many tears. How many huzzas, how many waving hands and beating hearts, how many flowers thrown in homage to a great genius, would discourage a narrator to tell of! To have taken twenty steps, once in a lifetime in such an acclamation, must, later, render a martyrdom very light, . . . . . or very heavy.

The excitement lasted a quarter of an hour. Charles Rolland had the honor, which seldom happens to one so young, of giving the welcome to each guest. (It met the national sentiment, and resulted in two nominations for him, to the "Constituante" in 1848, and to the National Assembly in 1870, without count-

ing those of the future).<sup>\*</sup> His welcome was very happily expressed, and much applauded. He attracted a little of the absorbing interest given to Lamartine. I remember a part of the discourse.

"We thank you for having accomplished the great work of our day. You have separated from the faults of time, from the errors of man, from the crimes of factions, the immortal principles of the French Revolution, and have held them before our eyes, in all their purity and power. France will never forget, thanks to you, the value of Liberty, Equality and Peace, nor the progress of the human race towards all questions of social improvement.

"Ah! let us not forget that anarchy arrests, and cruelty destroys these priceless boons. By the wonderful power of eloquence, the secret of which you possess, you have given to public opinion an impenetrable armor!"

A storm was approaching, a veritable tempest in the heavens. The last words were still vibrating, when from the surcharged clouds, the lightnings flashed. The wind followed fast upon the pealing thunder.

The superstitious saw in this, an omen of events. The Revolution was about to break loose. The Tuileries would tremble in the tempest.

The tents and awnings were blown away. The

<sup>\*</sup> Charles Rolland died a senator, in 1877. These lines were written in 1872.

sky opened, letting down a deluge of rain and hail, while the thunder continued to roll and crash over our heads. But this crowd of six thousand people, were so powerfully held by curiosity, and admiration, that except for a few frightened women, no one left the place.

Lamartine came forward on the platform. His first words were an inspiration.

“You are truly the sons of those Gauls, who said, “If the sky falls we will raise it again with our lances!” he exclaimed.

In order to see better, we climbed upon the tables, which from time to time, broke down under our weight. The spectators fell; many were injured, but not a cry was heard. We closed up the ranks, as during a battle, after the cannon has made a breach, and the speech continued for two hours, interrupted only by frantic applause. It was one of the most magnificent and inspiring improvisations the world has ever heard,

The force of expression did not detract from the majesty and beauty of the thought. For a long time, the voice was accompanied by the rolling thunder, like the sub-bass of an organ, but *this*, at last grew weary, and gradually died away, before the indefatigable eloquence of the tribune.

I can only give a few fragments brought to us on the wings of the wind.

“In listening to the words, which have just been addressed to me, in your name, by my young friend M. Rolland, the first magistrate of your city, who has laid aside his official capacity to appear here in the character granted to him by your friendship! In contemplating this immense concourse of citizens and strangers, this camp of friends, this army of guests, and this brilliant throng of ladies, who represent here the highest rôle in the history of Revolutions, that of Mercy and Pity, what foreign traveller, happening to enter our city or pass by our own river, would not ask, what National event we were celebrating to-day, what civic commemoration, what great man? What minister, what distinguished citizen, were we honoring by this reception, this acclamation, this public munificence? And if some one should reply that there was nothing of this kind going on, that there was no minister, no great statesman, no soldier carrying the palm of a victorious campaign—but simply, the return to his fireside of an obscure citizen—(protestations). Yes! a simple citizen like yourselves, who wishes no other distinction from you than the esteem and affection you lavish upon him: I repeat it, the return of a simple citizen, who having defended, alas! too often fruitlessly, the national principles at the tribune, has also imperfectly written a few pages of the history of his country. Is there, I ask you, gentlemen, is there a stranger, who would

not be astonished at such a spectacle, and who would not exclaim, that a people capable of according such honors to the most modest works of the mind, is, above all a people of intelligence, meriting the supremacy, not of the soil, but of the intellects of Europe, by those very works that it recognizes so soon, feels so keenly, and recompenses so magnificently.

“Is the French Revolution, as its adversaries have called it, a sedition of the people, agitating itself needlessly, and crushing its church, its monarchy, its castes, its institutions, its nationality, and even rending the map of Europe? If this is true, the Revolution produced by Christianity must also be called a sedition, for, in order to take its place, has it not, from the beginning, caused a subversion of old systems and ideas, to the remotest corners of the known world. No, the Revolution was not a miserable sedition in France, for a sedition subsides as it rises, leaving behind it only ruin, and death. The Revolution has left its scaffolds and desolation. This is its remorse and unhappiness! But it has also left a doctrine and a spirit which will be perpetuated, and endure, as long as human reason exists.

“Reaction is the recoil of ideas. It seems as if Reason, seeing the new truths, which Revolutions,



made in its name, have thrust upon the world, frightened at its own boldness, recoils and withdraws, from all the ground that it has gained. But this is only for a day; other hands will re-load that peace-giving battery of thought, and there will be new explosions, not of bullets, but of light, shining with full power upon those truths which seem to have been abandoned, or vanquished.

“And should you ask what is this new force that will subject governments to a national will, I will reply; it is the sovereignty of ideas, it is the royalty of the mind, it is the *Republic*, the *true Republic*, the Republic of Intelligence, in other words, it is *Public Opinion*! This force holds in its hand the balance of Reason, in which ideas and institutions are held in equilibrium. In one of the scales, you must understand that for a long time, there will be put the old credulities, the prejudices, so-called useful, the divine right of kings, the distinction of rights between classes of men, between nations, the spirit of conquest, the simoniacal union of Church, and State, the censorship of thought, the science of the tribune, ignorance and complete abasement of the masses!

“In the other scale, we will put,—WE, gentlemen, the element, the most impalpable, most imponderable of all that God has created,—LIGHT! A little of that Light, which at the end of the last century was



projected by the French Revolution, from a volcano no doubt, but from a volcano of truth!

“I have kept you standing a long time ; standing, like witnesses in the great litigation between the past and the future ! Pardon me.

You have given me, in spite of an inauspicious sky, a beautiful day, the most glorious day of my political, and literary life. Grant me one wish. Give me your names, that I may preserve them for my peaceful years, among the cherished souvenirs of the past, and in showing them to posterity, I may say, “Such a day that a country like France gives to one of her children, does not go down with the sun !”

These were his last words. He fell back upon the platform, like a prophet exhausted with the visions of the glorious future, that he had just proclaimed.

The enthusiastic applause calmed, only to revive again. We carried him almost fainting, to his carriage, while two thousand voices sent out “La Marseillaise,” as a parting tribute. We accompanied him to his apartments in Mâcon, a ground floor, opening out upon a garden.

This little salon soon over-flowed with ardent patriots. If Lamartine had had as many hands as Briareus, he could not have shaken all that were extended to him. When the flood of visitors had sub-

sided, he opened the door, and walked out into the garden to refresh himself after the excessive fatigues of the day. Drops of rain from the trees fell upon us, as we strolled in the darkness.

“ You have proclaimed the Republic,” we said to him.

“ Perhaps so ! ” he replied, “ but I shall see only a very few years of the Hegira.”

Then pointing to a rift in the clouds, where a few stars were shining, he said.

“ The Republic comes from heaven. Let it never be corrupted here below ! ”

## IX.

### *Preparing for the Republic.*

ONE day in November, 1847, I was sitting in my father's cabinet at Bel-Air. He was then eighty-one years of age, and God was to preserve for seven years longer that clearness of mind, which was not obscured until the hour of his death. The question of Liberty had always interested my father more or less, but he believed that the only realization was in a Constitutionally Monarchical government. He comprehended freedom only in opinions. I cannot say, that it had not been a bitterness to see how college ideas, and the study of ancient history had turned his son towards the Republic, continuing even when the boy had become a man. But the choice of my master re-assured him, and his own tolerance stifled his groans. He knew very well that an abyss separated *our* Ideal from the "Terror," of which he had been a witness and victim, which had mowed down his friends, and had left in him what I would not like to call *prejudices*, against the Republic. He often discussed its dogmas with me, and my faith needed to be strongly implanted—not to be uprooted by his eloquence, and paternal authority.

This day, we were talking of the banquets then being held in the country around us. One had just been announced for Châlon-sur-Saône, and I did not care to tell him, that M. de Lamartine had asked me to go to it, where I should meet Ledru-Rollin, Flocon and many of the radical circle. Just then a servant announced that some one desired to see me.

“What is his name?” I asked.

“M. Caussidière. Shall I ask to come here?”

Caussidière had a terrible reputation, of which his intelligent and honest firmness has since robbed him. This unexpected visit surprised me, and I was sure that it would trouble my father, because it would seem to class me with such men. .

Ought I to say it? At heart, I was flattered. I was proud that a man of such combative democracy should seek me. I was not so well known then. What did he want? He had the reputation of being a conspirator. That side did not please me. I always had a horror of a combat not fought under the clear light of heaven.

I was then writing my first romance, “*Les Vendeurs du Temple*,” which was appearing in, “*La Reforme*,” Etienne Arago had given me a welcome in his paper. He was a man who always walked hand in hand with kindness, and patriotism. In those pages, inexperienced as they were, I was trying to trace a picture of the surroundings of Louis Philippe

and the corruptions of the impost régime. I was too ardent and severe. The reign of Bonaparte has since demonstrated that I then transcended the limits of criticism, and that it would have been more just to reserve the infamy for the crime itself. I expected, every morning, to be threatened by a lawsuit. My obscurity preserved me from that rather mixed pleasure. I was very careful not to let a copy of "*La Réforme*" come to Bel-Air, though my father has since read the book and forgiven me.

And this is the reason that I did not want him to see Caussidière. It was a mistake, for he would have been pleased,

I ordered the servant to show Caussidière into my own room. My father only questioned me by a kind look. He had heard the name, but he respected my way even in blaming it.

Caussidière was already up stairs, when I reached there. I saw a tall robust man. His very first words, showed a good nature tinged with acuteness. He seemed to have frequented bar-rooms too often. But was that his fault? He must proselyte, wherever he could find an audience.

I made him feel at ease by lighting my pipe, and begging him to draw his own from his pocket. He told me that he was travelling for "*La Réforme*," and had the goodness to say that my romance was very successful. He asked me to get subscribers in

the neighborhood of Cormatin. He could not stay in the country. The commissary of Police, at Mâcon, was on his track. He talked of the banquets; he expected to be present at Châlon. At that time, there was great rivalry between the republican schools, one represented by the "Nationale," Garnier-Pagès junior, and Armand Marrast; the other, by "La Réforme," Ledru-Rollin, Beaune and Flocon.

We were for "La Reforme."

I tried to make the conversation less general, and asked him, if he did not feel that he was quite in the heart of the Republic, on the ground where the "fête des Girondins" had been celebrated.

"Not exactly," said he smiling, "there are too many police there."

I recalled his words the next February.

I told him that the Republic would be established in that near future, when any one could say and write what Lamartine was writing, and that the only objection against it, was the fear of social questions which might arise, and "La Réforme" compromised the event, by examining these too closely without displaying a true socialistic flag. I wandered intentionally among all these troublesome questions.

"I am quite of your opinion" replied Caussidière, perhaps from kindness. "I write to the editors every day not to frighten the middle class; to leave this dispute to the schools that know how to dispose of

it. But I do not believe, as you do, in a Republic in our Calender."

"And yet you proclaim it, every day, between your two glasses of beer."

"I should proclaim it better still between two cannon balls," said he proudly. "It is a duty to die, and until one can die, to speak, even if the cause one sustains is despairing. I will never betray the people, by buttoning up under my coat what is in my heart. But it is neither you nor I who will see the consummation."

"When a man of genius is put at the head of a movement, that movement is in the thought of God, and he succeeds," responded I. "If you had been here the eighteenth of July, you would feel more confident. The Revolutions are personified in a hero, and we *have* him among us."

"I have heard Lamartine speak at the tribune," he replied, "and I will not pretend that he has not moved me deeply. His speech is like the wind upon the waves, and will only raise the surface. The waves make a great noise, when they do not carry great fleets. We are not ready yet. We shut ourselves up in our habits and in our shops, like oysters in their shells. So long as the working class will not let themselves be organized into regiments, the regular army, drawing its rations of soup and good shoes, will always beat us. I would make a very



good kind of a sergeant, but at the moment of attack, I should have only the rabble at my heels. Unfortunately for himself, and his friends, Lamartine is a nobleman, he has not sucked the milk of the she-wolf. One must suffer, to know how to exact from others. He will believe that he had paid his debt to his country by dedicating to it a strophe. He will seek for a rhyme where he should be seeking for a cartridge. He is too brave ever to betray his country, but he will betray himself. He will force Legitimists into the Republic, and it will be a fine thing to see Marquises dressed like Tiberius Gracchus."

"As the future, perhaps, will see them dressed like Caussidière," said I laughing.

I endeavored afterwards to explain to him that our first guarantee to the Republic, should be Universal Suffrage, and that would endure always.

"Bah!" he replied, with a sagacity almost clairvoyant, "if the suffrage is direct, the peasants will vote for Jocrisse as Emperor, or King."

"Time has moved forward. The peasants will no longer vote for Jocrisse; he has too much blood on his hands."

We talked again of "*La Réforme*," and finally agreed to meet at the banquet, at Châlon. In going away, we turned into the garden to avoid passing my father's cabinet. Caussidière walked slowly, as if he had something more to say.

"I do not want you to think, that I am a "sans culotte," said he, at last. "I am travelling for business and the good of the country, at the same time. I know that the guillotine caused more shutters to close, than heads to fall. I have a bad face, but a good heart, and if I had lived in his time, I would have walled up Marat's cellar, and he might have drowned himself in his infectious inkstand. I insist, that the streets should be free, and that the cleansing of social vaults should not interfere with pure respiration. I would make order by the strength of solid fists, if necessary, and if I had been the police of Louis Phillippe, I would have arrested Caussidière long ago. I sometimes drag a straw mattress to the pawnbrokers, but I do not think that we should make a grand washing in the castles without the permission of those who have soiled the linen. If you had a chateau, I would go and ask for soup, but I would light nothing but my pipe. While waiting for me to come, draw up a list."

"Of the prescribed?" said I, taking his great hand, and again laughing.

"No, subscribers for "La Réforme." I receive forty cents for each subscriber, One must live, and make people read "Les Vendeurs du Temple."

We reached the gate. Some one was ringing. I saw, with trepidation, that it was Lamartine.

"Will you let me present you?" said I to Caussidière.

"No," he replied reddening, "I smell too strong of absinthe."

I opened the gate for Lamartine. Caussidière bowed to him and disappeared. Four months after he was Prefect of Police under Lamartine. I related our conversation to Lamartine, while it was fresh to me, a circumstance doubtless powerful towards the nomination, which was one of the brilliant actions of the Revolution of February.

The banquet of Châlon was announced with great commotion. Lamartine came to talk over the matter. His refusal to appear annoyed me. I thought after the great triumph of the "fête des Girondins," that there could not be a patriotic festival without him, but I lament this one occasion where his sovereign word was lacking. I begged that his absence should not have an appearance of disapproval.

"That is what it is, however," said he. "I do not want to combat Ledru-Rollin in public. I admire him and consider him a force in the democracy, but my sympathies are not with the Radicals. I do not want *always* to go to the root of the matter, and hinder the flowering.

"The tree consists of more than what is in the ground. It has all that can grow from the sap it contains; the tree of Liberty as well as others. It has

a trunk, and branches, which I do not pretend to prune. So let us not confirm a fatal distinction between Republicans and Radicals. We do not want too many of a family to make a people. Say that for me. You will do it better than I."

This way of speaking was habitual to him.

I went to Châlon. It was not a festival of sun and storm, that made so striking a spectacle at Mâcon. The sky was gray; the space more contracted; the company not a quarter so large. M. M. Ledru-Rollin, Flocon, Beaune and Caussidière, did the honors of the occasion. Letters of regret, or non-acceptance, from Lamartine, Mathieu, de Thiars, deputies of Saône-et-Loire, and Dupont de l'Eure, did not console the public for their absence.

Ledru-Rollin pronounced a magnificent, though rather exclusive eulogy upon the Convention. Lamartine criticized it from a republican stand-point, in the *Bien Public*.

This is what he said.

"We have read M. Ledru-Rollin's speech. It is bold, eloquent and significant. From M. Ledru-Rollin's and his friend's point of view, there is much to admire in its appropriateness. It is pure and clear; it has a firm fibre; it contains a desire and a design; there is no disguise in it; it does not psalm-odize in words of cotton or snow, which fall noiselessly upon the earth, effacing all the road-ways.

M. Ledru-Rollin is comprehensible,—perhaps too much so," etc. . . . .

The great interest of the day to me, concentrated at M. Mathey's, the deputy of Châlon, who had invited the famished orators to dine with him.

M. Mathey was afterwards Commissary of the Republic, at Mâcon, where he left many pleasant memories. He was father of Alfred Mathey, a friend of Lamartine's, prefect of Ardennes in 1848, and who continues the paternal traditions in excellence and patriotism.

There was a large gathering at M. Mathey's. A quarter of the future members of the Provisionary Governments were to sit at the table, unconscious of that immediate future. I regretted not having Causidière there; he would have given character to the scene. I never had had the honor of meeting M. Ledru-Rollin till then, and have never seen him since. His voluntary exile, for the past twenty years, has kept us apart. He was a powerful instrument in the democratic ranks, unhappily too long silent. Gambetta evidently has restrained him. This silence is like an accusation. The tribune is large enough for many voices.

He had made a splendid speech, and did not seem at all exhausted. That great chest held breath enough for twenty speeches, but there were ladies present, and he did not impose upon them longer

than to satisfy their curiosity. He proved himself a temperate and attractive speaker, and left the impression of being a thorough man of the world.

The absence of Lamartine was not hard to bear since it gave him the first place. He asked many questions about the banquet of the "Girondins," and spoke with warm interest of the great work.

"The greatest service that Lamartine has rendered to the public," said he, "is, that one can now discuss Robespierre, without being taken for an anthropophagus."

Flocon abandoned himself to his theories, and frightened the ladies.

"We belong to the "Reds" said he, using this new denomination for the first time, "if we come to the power, our flag shall be purple."

The color was ill-chosen, especially at table. Ledru-Rollin only approved of it, outwardly. Who could have foretold, that in February following, Flocon would have been the most intrepid soldier of the government in his campaign against the red flag, and that Lamartine was constantly obliged to reanimate the courage of Ledru-Rollin, which turned to a moderation almost inert.

After dinner, I went out on the quay to smoke with Flocon. His speech at the banquet produced a marked effect. Though it was a little too much like a newspaper article. After the initial conversa-

tion, I found the man much more gentle than his doctrine, and that the terrorist envelope was only a decoration of doubtful taste. There was an honesty about him, mixed, as it was, with the odors of a smoking room. The reaction, with its habitual frankness and moderation, had made him a blood-drinker when he was only a colorer of pipes. He had the dignity of exile, and the recompense for his poverty. He went out of the Ministry with empty hands, and in his exile among the Swiss mountains could hear the nauseating satire of those whom he had saved, but in turning his ear towards a clearer horizon, he could hear the voice of Lamartine, who spoke of him as one of his most esteemed and beloved co-workers.

We went back to M. Mathey's. Ledru-Rollin predicted that I should represent the department of Saône-et-Loire, an honor not coming to me until twenty-three years later.

I went home to Cormartin, that same evening and told my wife of the banquet and addresses.

I had heard many eloquent words, and shaken hands with many strangers, whom political opinions had almost made friends, and yet I had not brought back a gratified feeling. I felt no emotion at the remembrance of the day.

I asked myself the reason—

We were all combatants for the Republic and our aspirations were identical. Beyond the veil, con-



cealed from the common gaze, we could see dynasties flying in the distance. We had been called citizens for the first time, a name perhaps made too common since, but belonging to those great gatherings where the forum is improvised, and manly, independent speech is heard. But I was not trustful, nor even grateful.

I could only explain it, in one way.

God did not enter into the hopes of these men, which without Him, were shadowy and irresolute. No free-thinker is farther than I, from the adoration of dogmas and worn-out practices of worship, but the more of a Republican I am, the nearer I feel to God. He is not only the Light but the fortress of our Democracy. Without Him, without an idea of Sacrifice and human responsibility, Constitutions are only texts of the law, monuments of sand, demolished and rebuilt by every wind that ever blows. There is no true fraternity in morality alone, and without fraternity, there is no Republic,

This is my conviction, and I wish, without being accused of mysticism, that I could convince my co-religionists in Democracy, of it.

Science has given freedom to intellectual order, and unlimited progress to material order. It cannot give the Ideal. *That*, Lamartine has poured out with a lavish hand. He is dead, and Hugo is no longer at the tribune. Those who dare to speak

God's name, lessen it by talking of the Pope, and Veuillot, does not comprehend Him, or misinterprets Him by making Him the signal of all his enmities. I see the prophets of the past weeping around a lost Jerusalem, and I seek in vain for the prophets of the future, who, kindled by his inspiration will sing around the Republic,—the New Jerusalem of the people.

This prophet must appear. He sits in some shadowy corner, and I am sure that the day is near when he will arise.\*

\* He has arisen. Hugo is in the Senate.

## X.

### *The Republic of 1848.*

FEBRUARY 22d. 1848, I went, with M. Gormand, a dear old friend, who has recently died, to see Léon Bruys, at OUILLY, who was then beginning to feel the pressure of circumstances. In the hope of a marriage, which, certain as it appeared, never was consummated, he had demolished his old Chateau and built a villa for an Italian Countess who was never to see it. He had the imprudence to put his sonnets into stone, and his fortune into illusions.

He received us at the farm to which his decreasing income had reduced him. The supper there was merry. M. Gormand, who had *seen* the world under the Empire, and had read its history in books, and had been persecuted by the Restoration for his radical opinions, opened to us a treasure-house of anecdotes. Three beds were arranged in the great chamber, and we tried, in vain, to sleep. We all gave loose reins to our imaginations, that night. We knew that a Reform banquet was in preparation at Paris, and that the Government had resolved to interfere. Our hopes became certainties. In the depth of the woods, we heard the rumors of a Revolution,

and the Republic was our first thought and expression. We held its advent assured, in spite of all improbabilities, and each of us sang its praise in his own diapason. There are always germs of events traversing space. These, we collected, and our confidence was such that, though not prepared, we went the next day to Mâcon to be nearer action.

I ask pardon for giving two chapters without Lamartine, but he is so inseparably connected with all that we did, that a record of the events of those few days seems necessary to what I have yet to say of him. During that time of action, we, his friends, made it our constant duty to be inspired by him.

Mâcon was full of rumors. The Revolutionary wind had risen beyond the walls of Paris, and was blowing fiercely all over France. Paris was far away, for the lines of railroad had not yet been established, and kept its news to itself, but we felt that something terrible was going on.

The public generally did not believe in the fall of the dynasty. The most daring only dreamed of an electoral reform, and a change of ministry. Mâcon, having had its "fête des Girondins," breathed the renovating air of the Republic.

Every body was in the street or on the quay. We knew nothing more, than that Lamartine had made a great speech, and had declared that the "left" would go with him to the prohibited banquet.

We could not control our impatience. We extemporized democratic feasts. The patriots gathered around a long table, over which were busts of Lamartine, the republican deputy of Saône-et-Loire, and Mathieu, the learned brother-in-law of Arago. Many ardent but prudent words, were spoken there. We did not sleep that night. We were sure that there was fighting in Paris. The Revolution would have its three traditional days : so while waiting, we watched on our arms.

The next day, the government of Louis Philippe was a dead letter at Mâcon. The soldiers did not interfere with the public meetings, and cries of " Long live Reform," were heard on all sides. The post had not arrived. From the road, we could see the arms of the telegraph agitating convulsively, but its signs were unintelligible. The revolt against the despised government, was fermenting in all hearts. The powerless prefecture, not receiving any news, did not dare to organize any resistance. An intelligent population could easily repress any violence that might break forth, but leaders were necessary. The city, like all others, had its proportion of liberated convicts. Under a pretext of patriotism, crime might burst all restraints. Suspicious groups were already threatening to throw M. Delmas, the prefect, into the Saône, and to set fire to some of the convents. Rolland, in his capacity as Mayor, provided against the first

danger. A popular assembly was convoked at the Hotel-de-Ville, and a prefectorial commission of twelve, was formed. As it is a part of our local history, I will give their names. MM. Carteron, Senton, Bruys D'Ouilly, Saclier, Foillard, Bouchard, Ordinaire, Hippolyte Boussin, Henri de Lacretelle, Sambin, Versaud, Chanorier.

Our first duty was to install ourselves, in the prefecture, dispossess the prefect, and assume the direction of the government. We were still in complete ignorance of the state of affairs at Paris.

There was a dangerous possibility that the Republic had been overcome. In such a case, we would be shot. Bugeaud was said to be a prompt man.

However, if patriotism was not manifested, blood would flow, and the torch would be applied.

Lamartine's name was mingled in the struggle, and in order that he should not die in a wretched failure, it was important, that the movement should take a republican character. We had been working for years for this result, by every throb of the heart.

None of us hesitated. It was night.

We went to the Prefecture. The concierge opened wide the doors. We appealed to M. Delmas, in the name of the people, of the future, and of public Concord. He showed himself a man of sense, and though warning us that we were playing a dangerous game, did not resist. He suspected perhaps, that he might

be threatened. We allowed him to remain as a private citizen as long as he thought agreeable, guaranteeing his security upon our honor.

He had not unlimited confidence in the solidity of his government, and he was thinking, too, of a future reaction. The Prefects had no desire to sacrifice themselves for Louis Philippe. Sacrifices were reserved for St. Etienne, in 1871, and for the Republic. M. Delmas resigned officially. He summoned the Chiefs of the service, and put the direction into our hands.

We were to sleep at the Prefecture.

There were now twelve prefects. As many of my colleagues are still living, without fear of offense I shall simply say, that *some* were men of great intelligence, and *all* were men of courage.

This sudden stroke of policy had not been unwise. Rolland aided our inexperience by his counsels. He thought it was useless for *all* to remain at the Prefecture that night, and finally the choice fell upon Bruys and myself.

By request, the Colonel of the National Guard had put two companies at our disposal. We had seen the general, M. de Lostende, and had demanded the disbandment of the regiments at once. As a loyal soldier, he refused, but his attitude assured us that we had nothing to fear from their bayonets.

We were finally settled in the private office of the



Prefect, and, for hours, there was a constant coming and going with orders. When this ceased, I said to Bruys,

"Thou wilt sleep in the Easy-Chair and I will stand watch."

He looked at me with surprise. He was many years older than I, and this was the first time that I had ever used the intimate form of address.

"I take advantage of the revolutionary period," said I. "Since we share the same danger, I feel that I love thee too well to say 'You.'"

He held out both hands to me, and responded most earnestly.

"I shall bless the Republican era for this," said he. "I do not believe that I can sleep. Who knows what will happen to Lamartine in this fiery ordeal?"

"Lamartine, dying for Liberty, will surpass all the glories of history," said I, "and there is no doubt but that we shall be wrapped in a corner of his shroud."

"You take a mournful view of affairs. You are thinking of your wife. I have just made a journey into Switzerland, and have a passport. You may take it. I am a bachelor, you know."

"As you prove every day," said I trying to laugh, for a diversion. "I shall not leave the post of danger any sooner than you. I have other anxieties than my wife. My father, mother and brother are in Paris.

Strong excitement are sometimes fatal to aged people. My fear is paralysis or a stroke of apoplexy, and then my father could never forgive me, for protesting against the established government. The very name of Republic is a horror to him."

"In your anxieties, you misjudge him. The second Republic will pardon the first, in the most prejudiced mind, if Lamartine directs it. Your father will honor you, for having obeyed your convictions."

I felt that he was right, and that I was only doing my duty, though my father's eighty-two years were constantly before me.

"After all," said I, to myself, "if Paris is a coward, and France is indifferent, it will be a proud thought for us all, to have proclaimed the Republic in Lamartine's own city. In all reason the question must be settled to-morrow. Let us prepare for it. Let the provincial movement go from here."

I took up a pen to write an announcement, to submit to my colleagues. A hasty step was heard, others soon followed. The National Guard entered. They tell us that the convicts mean to set fire to M. Courteau's house. "Will you come?"

This question of convicts was constantly rising. It was time that the government should take hold of it and make some kind of a law, ensuring social security, as well as the regeneration of these creatures.

M. Courteau had brought upon himself great un-

popularity, as mayor, a few years before, so that an attempt against his house was not unlikely.

We called two other companies, and hastened to the threatened quarter. All was absolutely tranquil. The streets were deserted. Excited imaginations had seen torches, where there was not even a lantern.

There were no other incidents that night.

The next day, the most contradictory rumors were heard everywhere. Travellers coming from Châlon said that the Republic was declared officially at Paris, and that Emmanuel Arago had passed through the city, by post, to take possession of the Prefecture at Lyons. Other said that Louis Philippe had withdrawn to Vincennes, and was preparing to bombard Paris from the forts, and that the Council of Magistrates would make short work of the rebels. This was only a stronger reason for us to decide. A large meeting was called at the Hotel-de-Ville. The same names were proclaimed, and we asked to have M. Pissère's added, as the working class should be represented.

The post arrived at noon. We received proclamations of the Republican Provisionary Government signed Lamartine, Dupont de l'Eure, Arago, Ledru-Rollin, Louis Blanc, and Flocon. It displayed the red flag. Personally we were safe, but this red flag floated before us like an evil omen. We were not men of that color. We foresaw the tragic scenes of

the Hotel-de-Ville, where Lamartine as dictator, by his courage and the power of his word caused the furious crowd to lay down the axes they had raised against him, and lower the red flag that they would have forced upon France ; where he so filled their hearts with his own ardor and clemency, that for two months, the name of Lamartine was the only one upon their lips.

Many words spoken from the steps of the Hotel-de-Ville during the tempest of February, have already been published. The episode of the red flag is only one of many grand speeches sent into the midst of the tumult. A story will be written of that in the course of events.

Here is another, which prevented the first bloodshed, that afterwards flowed like a river.

One day in March, workshops were fermenting either for want of occupation, or in the miasma of sinister theories. An immense concourse of men thronged the place, crying "Vengeance! Death to Lamartine!" He descended at once. The crowd redoubled their imprecations, and gesticulations. They were ready to throw him to the wild beasts. He walked steadily forward, until he was in the midst of those picks, and axes, still bearing the rust of 1793.

"You ask for the head of Lamartine," he cried.

"Yes! Yes!"

“Would to heaven, you had it on your own shoulders! You would be less insane, and you would not extinguish the light of the Republic in its dawning!”

He knew that his eloquence was a sovereign force to disarm. Their souls were moved, and Lamartine had only to stretch out his hands to their lips.

What a magnificent government is that having no other Prætorian Guard than Courage and Genius! We received the news of what was happening, with great enthusiasm. During the first week, there was nothing but an exchange of patriotic sentiments. We seemed to breathe in a higher atmosphere. Truth shed its glorious light upon all sides. Every day was more lustrous. The Emancipation of Slaves, the Abolition of Capital Punishment, Universal Suffrage; with these acts we would found a government fit for saints, and philosophers. Hearts expanded from the influence of the Republic dwelling in them. Let those who since then, have thrown the venom of their hatred against the men of the Hotel-de-Ville, show us a sovereign who has given the people greater proof of generosity and wisdom.

We did our best to impregnate our administrative acts with the spirit of democratic benevolence. We did not appoint new Mayors any where, nor did we displace those that the people sustained, even if they had served under another régime.

We held popular meetings to explain republican

principle and Universal suffrage.—We preached Concord ; we encouraged associations ; we extracted the bitterness from irritating questions ; we aided labor, and established a practical brotherhood. We rose early, to announce the progress of the Republic, and lay down late, to assure a repose for all.

There were some bright spots in our serious movements, and in our duties. Dr. Carteron, a true Gaul, presided. Dr. Bouchard improvised beautiful verses, and Dr. Ordinaire—too many physicians, alas ! for a Republic which appeared to have a robust Constitution,—cheered us by his vivid imagination.

There was quite a rivalry between Mâcon, and Châlon. One day, the “ *Moniteur* ” brought to us the news of the nomination of two Châlonnais, as special Commissaries of the Republic.

“ Ye great Gods ! exclaimed M. Carteron. “ Two Carthaginians at Rome ! ”

The convent of “ *Les Filles-Repenties* ” was hated, partly because it was a convent, and partly because it competed with free labor. There were threatening demonstrations. We protected the nuns against the riots, although they were more frightened than they had any reason to be. We were obliged to foresee and provide against any excess, and so it was decided, that the holy house should be vacated. I was detailed to take charge of the expedition. It was with a good deal of repugnance that I accepted a commis-

sion, likely to make me very ridiculous. The Hospital had offered a refuge to the proscripts. Curiosity had collected a great crowd of people, who wanted to see the young culprits, whom Religion claimed to have drawn from vice, while at the same time, she drew from them a lucrative profit. This crowd might suddenly be transformed into a dangerous element.

The sisters were at the apex of terror. They pretended to think that the soldiers we had stationed to protect them from insult, had come to massacre. The door opened only in the name of the law. The Mother-Superior, threw herself at my feet, beseeching me to save them.

"That is what we are here for," said I, "get ready, and follow me! The sisters at the Hospital are expecting you there."

"But the walk, sir. The people will kill us, because the Republic takes us away. I will not expose my daughters to their vengeance. Kill me on the spot!"

I was not touched by this appeal: the fright did not seem sincere.

"The Republic," said I, "is a guarantee for your goods and your lives, and I have come, in its name, to take you away."

"The house will be pillaged, if we leave it. These people are only robbers, and will violate the goods of the church."



She cried very loud, and I was afraid that her lavish epithets would excite indignation. The whole house was in tears. They cried according to rule, while in their hearts, they laughed, as the result of the tumult might be their liberty. I said to the superior, if she prolonged the scene, I should remove her by force. She raised her eyes to heaven, invoked all the Saints in the Calendar, and then proceeded to pack her valise—with preserves.

The people, outside, were singing, and the soldiers were disposed to be a little gallant, a demonstration that I was obliged to crush. To bring a body of armed men against women, was not an agreeable thing to do. So I removed the company, and, in a few hours we were on the road to the Hospital. A double row of idle spectators were waiting to see us pass. I wore my scarf as magistrate, and walked at the head of the weeping column. I looked round once in a while, wishing that I was a hundred miles away. The scene was absurd, but the question involved was grave, and one that was to come directly under my supervision.

A young girl with a Raphaellesque head, and a face brightened by a smile of apparent sincerity, detached herself, little by little, from the group of penitents, and walked beside me. She related her story, how she had been deceived by the father of a family, where she worked by the day. The scandal

filled the quarter, and she was shut up in a convent, where they promised to restore her virtue. They sent her to Mâcon, where she was badly treated. She begged me to let her go, assuring me of her lasting gratitude. She plead in the name of her youth, her eighteen years, and she was as ready with her coquetry, as with her tears. Her supplications were accompanied by gestures, strongly resembling caresses. The public eye was upon us and it may be that my sincerity was doubted. The Superior did not interfere, hoping, unquestionably, that such an advocate, would be useful to the rest of the company. I hurried towards the Hospital, and recommended the penitent to the care of the Sisters, and came back to the Prefecture, thinking that Léon Bruys would have been much more embarrassed, if he had had to deal with such a fascinating petitioner.

That same evening, I was at the Hotel-de-Ville with Rolland. The Commissary of Police of the old government, whom the people hated for his zeal in arresting, came silently into the shadows of the corridors, to tell Rolland that his degradation had taken the bread from the mouths of his family.

He asked for a letter to Caussidière, stating that he had been honest in his duties. There was nothing to say against his private character. The Mayor was touched, and the letter was written. There was great indignation, when the people heard of this. They

blamed Rolland, but exonerated him in a few days. The old commissary went to Paris, and boldly presented his letter to the Prefect of Police. Caussidière did not take the trouble to read it.

"I recognize you," said he, "You followed me very diligently, two months ago, in the time of Louis Philippe. I need a man like you, and nominate you to the Palais Royale quarter."

Caussidière thus made the Republic without Republicans.

The story circulated, and the laughs were all on Rolland's side.

However, there was an end to the functions of the Intermediate Commission. M. Mathey was nominated Prefect of Saône-et-Loire, and the rest of us scattered ourselves throughout the department, to prepare the elections for the Constituents. It was a question of turning the minds of the people towards the Republic, and of instructing them. M. Mathey as a loyal and experienced democrat, helped us in our task, by the public information that he sent.

Bruys, and I did our proselyting through our newspaper, with which we inundated the country. We felt that we were to be candidates, by obligation, as well as by the friendship of Lamartine. An electoral commission, formed at Paris, arranged everything without consulting the departments. The list of candidates passed without protest and our two

names were not on it. To be sure, we had only the voice of one canton, but that was unanimous.

Champvans had just been nominated representative in the department of Ain. His advancement had been rapid. He was chosen prefect of the Republic at Bourg. From the very beginning, he gave the fever to his whole department. Even now, when I think of him at Gand, I do not doubt his sincerity at that time. Once, he was at Nantes, haranguing the people. A providential storm accompanied his resonant voice. As the wind howled through the cliffs around the lake, he exclaimed.

“ Even should this rock fall upon my head, it will not keep me from crying, “ Long live the Republic ? ”

Ledru Rollin, who disorganized his prefectures trying to fortify them, sent M. Anselme Pètetin to Bourg, as a special commissary. Champvans suspected the future functionary of the Empire, and could not forgive Lamartine for allowing an inspector to be placed over him. He sent in his resignation with a great flourish, and went out of the Prefecture, dramatically carrying his baby's cradle, thus giving the budding reaction an opportunity of making a profit out of his misfortune. He was sent to the Constituante.

I tell these things without mercy, because Champvans has now a reputation, and if a mind less prejudiced, had admitted that Lamartine with the weight

of France upon his shoulders, could not occupy himself with his friends, a natural sensibility was justified in feeling wounded at this lack of confidence.

Champvans gradually passed over to the Legitimists, and to the church. But he made a good war against the Empire, and in spite of what he is to-day or whatever may be our personal political griefs, we cannot help admiring him, nor can we help seeing him—in the past, as one of the soldiers of the Democracy.

Lamartine did not forget his disciples, though some of them, Adolphe de La Tour among others, were left in a lamentable inaction. We had not yet adopted the Republic without Republicans. Abbé Thyons, I have already said, was sent as Consul to Bucharest. Dr. Pascal received a nomination as Prefect of Allier, but declined, not caring to abandon a lucrative practice. His nephew, our much to be regretted friend, Felix Mornand, was Commissary of the Republic in the South. Lamartine was kind enough to write to me, proposing a diplomatic mission to Italy, giving me a choice of residence. I have his letter yet among many others in that dear hand-writing.

Owing to sickness in my family, I was kept at Cormatin, and did not witness the Revolution of February on its own theatre, for which I never can console myself. It would be necessary to go to Italy

at once, and I could not, then, take my wife. Moreover, it was March, and the choice of candidates had not been made. I believed that I had a chance, and felt that I could do more for the Democracy in Parliament, than I could in the Legation. The honor of a title, was not a sufficient inducement, and for the first time, I refused Lamartine. He approved of it, nine months after. I certainly should have resigned December tenth, and it would have been a loss of time for the small satisfaction of writing on my card, "Ex-minister of France to Italy."

We went to Paris, at the end of May. It was as stormy as an ocean between two tempests. The Republic, as was its duty, allowed itself to be attacked by an insolent reaction. Lamartine had begun to descend from his height. For his prudence and generosity, which had kept him from putting Ledru-Rollin aside, he received only the fifth place in the Executive Commission. In this way was he rewarded, who had been sent by twelve departments, and to whom the bourgeoisie of Paris, half-crazy with fear, after the eighteenth of May, would have given the crown, and whom the National Guard had proclaimed through the streets, crying, "Long live King Lamartine."

I found him one morning, in his little cabinet, at Faubourg St. Germain, a king indeed, but, happily, without a sceptre. I never saw him in such a state

of excitement. He had just learned that the man of Strasburg and Boulogne had asked for a candidacy to return to France. Lamartine was hurrying to the Assembly to oppose the measure with all his power and eloquence. I went with him. The drive was one continuous invective. He predicted all that has happened, the insanity of the people, the ruin of the Republic, the Restoration of the Empire, the orgies, the bloodshed, the conquest and the invasion. He could not have been more eloquent at the tribune than he was in the carriage. The repeal of the law of banishment was voted, in spite of all his efforts. Several days after, I was at the Bois de Boulogne, where he had lived for the past three years. A guard was before the door, and in the court.

There was no longer a tempest in Paris, but regular waves of people dashing themselves against an unknown and uncertain shore. M. de Falloux, who was skilled in sapping the Republic, had obtained the abolition of the national workshops, and thus, published a decree of famine to two hundred thousand workmen.

Lamartine was less troubled this day. He felt that a battle was imminent, but he trusted to the word of Cavaignac, the Minister of War, who told the Government a dozen times a day that an army was on its way to Paris. Lamartine did not forget outside matters in his care for those nearer home. He



announced that instructions were to be sent for an army to descend into Italy. He counted as much upon the effect of his Manifestoes to Europe as upon regiments, for the prompt solution of the Austrian question. He no longer confided in Pius Ninth as an auxiliary of the Republic. Was he perfectly sincere as Head of the Government, in the hope that he openly expressed to those who pressed about him to hear what he had to say?

The barricades arose the next day. They were not the result of popular defiance against a government. They sprang from social questions, for which there was no solution. They came from empty workshops, from impossibility to find work, from cries of starving children and despairing mothers. They came, more especially, from those hideous receptacles of Bonapartist gold that, mixed with blood and filth, was poured into the hands of those unfortunate creatures, who were ignorant of its source, by those who afterwards were to direct the massacres of 1851.

These barricades arose, almost without resistance, and in front of scarcely three regiments, for the Minister of War had been deceived, and the battle, now ready, depended upon the responsibility of a divided National Guard, and a precarious temporary guard.

I went to rue de l'Université and met Pelletan at

the foot of the stairs. I asked him about this irrational crime against the Republic.

"It is no longer a question of the Republic," he replied. "Tis a society that is agonized and a Corsican banditti loading its muskets. Lamartine has just gone to meet Death."

I went up stairs. Mme. de Lamartine was very pale, but it was more for sorrow at the destruction of Paris, than fear of personal safety. Lamartine had no need of encouragement, but tears in his wife's eyes would have disheartened him, so the tears never came. Her soul lived only in her husband's. Though a foreigner and an aristocrat, she had just said to him, "I have seen your death in the Republic, and I have also seen your honor. Go! Long live the Republic!"

What he said that day in the insurrectionary Faubourgs; the kisses upon his hands, the women kneeling before his horse, the balls that he barely escaped, the despair of that great voice which could not prevent the adoration of the deceived, nor the imprecations of mercenaries, those only know, who with their cries, followed the fatal course, but they are all dead upon the barricades.

Lamartine went back home in despair. It was that despair which tempted the ancients to suicide; but God who imposes life as an inevitable burden, sustained him.

I could not go to him.

After four day's battle, during which there was heroism on both sides, summary executions, generals killed, an archbishop assassinated, a city laid waste by cannon-balls, they told us that the Republic was victorious.

It was dead.

I add a few details given me by my friend, Count de Tréveneuc, a friend of Carrel's, who, though wearing a uniform, moved, and still moves, more by reason than predilection, towards the Republic. He had been presented to Lamartine, at the Assembly, but by reason of his youth, had not received much attention.

The 24th of June he came to rue de l'Université, "What do you want?" said Lamartine hastily, "I have no time to listen to you, I am going to the barricades."

"I am going with you."

"I have no horse to offer you. Mme. de Lamartine's is already lent to Prince Pierre who goes with me."

Pierre Bonaparte, then representative, and sitting on the extreme left, had placed himself at Lamartine's disposal, and had been accepted on account of the importance of his name. M. de Tréveneuc, and Pierre Bonaparte were friends, and were going to the same massacre. They pressed each other's hands.

"I have hired a horse of Duplot," replied the Breton, "and I am ready to go too."

From the first, it was evident that Lamartine went forth to meet a ball. His tall figure was well-known. The streets, emptied by civil war, had few passers. They saw in Lamartine's presence, an official statement of an hour of peril.

Lamartine went directly towards the Hotel-de-Ville, where he found nothing to do. There was no fighting yet, and it was the battle he was seeking. He soon found it, or at least there was shooting near the canal St. Martin, at the corner of rue St. Maur, in front of a high barricade. A yelling, and threatening crowd were loading themselves with paving stones. The horses could not advance one step. Speech was interrupted by frequent shots. It was there where the attempt was made to speak, and the few cries of "Vive Lamartine," and the imprecations, of which I have spoken. There were no soldiers to contend with; and a few shots were fired upon the group.

"Lamartine preserved his calmness," said M. de Tréveneuc, "in the midst of the falling balls. M. Duclerc, the courageous and skilful Minister of Finance shared our danger—An editor of the "*Siècle*," who had joined us, besought Lamartine to withdraw. His only reply was a pressure of the hand. It seemed as if that was to be his place of apotheosis, and that by his death, the Republic would live.

Pierre Bonaparte's horse fell with a fractured knee. Lamartine came to me, and said in a low tone, "Tréveneuc, remember this and repeat it. I lost my popularity, and afflicted you all, when I asked you to put Ledru-Rollin on the Executive Commission. It was important that this force should be with us for the days that I saw approaching. It is here. The Republic will triumph in the end. I shall have broken nothing in its bonds."

The Liberator Death was not to come that day. Lamartine was obliged to go back to Paris, so as not to prolong a scene that only exhausted all heroism.

On the Boulevard, he was surrounded by a squad of Cavalry. At rue de la Paix, a gathering more ignoble, though of a higher class, cried "Vive l'Empereur." Pierre Bonaparte, the witnesses say, horse-whipped them.

## XI.

### *The Address at Cormatin.*

LAMARTINE returned to Monceaux in September. He was conquered, but with him were all the founders of the Republic. He left his work in the hands of an honest soldier, in whom justice, rather than the high ideal of good was paramount. He left it also, to an Assembly, in which were germinating the principles of the Legislative. What did it matter so long as the Republic survived, even nominally! Lamartine was resolved to defend it, to bear his personal griefs in silence, and to uphold those who had snatched his power from him. Here was the most sustained, and the least suspected development of this heroic character. He wanted his work for the Republic to remain, disfigured as it might be by the rubbish piled upon it.

We surrounded him. The neighboring country remained faithful. His great glory was considered a provincial patrimony. It was the only one left to him. The neighboring cities sent deputation after deputation. The peasants thought it an honor, to come and salute the Father of a Republic, that they were just beginning to comprehend. For a fortnight,

Monceaux was transformed into a Forum. Long processions, with beating drums, succeeded each other on the terrace, and Lamartine harangued them from the balcony. He seemed to renew himself incessantly, talking always in a language intelligible to his auditors. There was something of the Evangelist in him, and his parables were the lights of the Republican Church. The peasants, transformed, poured in like wine from the press. Eager hearts were beating under those blouses. The most rebellious against liberty, and the most hardened in ignorance, proud or humble, were converted.

One day, Lamartine received a letter, announcing a visit from the inhabitants of Saint Gengoux-le-Royal.

"I will not trouble them to come so far," said he, "Invite me to Cormatin, and then they will have only two leagues to travel."

The day was fixed for October seventeenth.

The chateau of Cormatin,—for it really is a chateau, as the monarchists of the last elections have so frequently printed it, hoping to make me suspected by the Republicans, who have responded to them by seventy-eight thousand votes,—though much too magnificent for the resources of its proprietor, had been one of the favorite resorts of Lamartine, in his youth. He had loved it with the facility which characterized him then, and often describes it—in his



"Mémoires." Every year, I had the pleasure of a visit. A special room was consecrated to him, and there he wrote one of his most remarkable chapters, the last banquet of the Girondists. The enchantment of the visits was always prolonged into other seasons. This particular visit was to bear a strictly political character. I invited my neighbors ; it was to be the event of the Canton.

Unfortunately, a fair, of which I was ignorant, was to be inaugurated at Cormatin on the same day, October seventeenth. That morning, a few strangers arrived at the hotel. Gold was seen rolling about on the table. Everybody thought that it belonged to some transaction of the fair.

There might be a volume written upon what we did at Cormatin, but I shall not have the imprudence to do it. Still, as it served as a theatre for the prologue of the Bonapartist reaction, I must give an outline in order to make the scene understood. Lamartine also was there, so this is my excuse for writing as follows.

The chateau was finished in 1612, by the Marquis d'Huxelles, the father and grandfather of the two marshals who bore that name. He was a rich lord, and brought workmen and artists from Italy for the interior decoration of the north wing. The gildings, delicacy and style of these apartments are well preserved. Those who know the style, admire it. In the five

great rooms with high mantels, and in the grand hall, it is easy to imagine oneself at Fontainebleau. Henry IV. visited there, before the house was finished, Mme. de Sévigné and Coulanges, as well as a great party from the court of Louis XIII. were also guests. The seventeenth and eighteenth centuries brought their rapiers, their plumed hats, their swords, their loves, and their ruins. According to ecclesiastical newspapers, from all these escutcheons, from all these pagan divinities, which are found on the ceilings, there can come only feudal inspirations. One has no right to feel himself one of the people, nor to dream of the Republic if, though only a poor combatant with the pen, he happens to inhabit the ancient dwelling of a marshal of France. Political convictions result from the roof under which one lives. There has been a duke here; therefore it is impossible that there should be a democrat. One is condemned to idiocy and sterility, because one of his ancestors did not know how to sign his name. If one ascends a marble staircase, he must necessarily be a defender of the king, and must be conspiring for his return. Yet, within fifty years, three deputies have gone out from Cormatin, and I have the honor of being the third.

The chateau was attacked before 1789 by an incendiary band, and rescued, after a skirmish. In 1812, in consequence of family disasters, and sundry adventures, it fell into the hands of the "Black-band"

(bande noire). The south wing on the long court formerly closed by a draw-bridge, was demolished, but the valiant chateau killed its destroyer, for a beam slipped, crushing him to death. Two façades remain standing. We enter by the gates where the taste of the Renaissance sculptured Ionic and Corinthian columns. The court now opening upon the garden, is very large, and it was here, where the scene was to take place.

The National Guard of Saint Gengoux-le-Royal, that patriotic and picturesque little city, arrived at ten o'clock, bringing in its train, all those having a spark of democracy or curiosity. Dixmier, of whom I shall speak again, was commandant. The guns were stacked in the hall and court.

The music of fife and drum were mingled with the ringing shouts of the village fair.

The lowing of cattle would be heard above the orchestra. The speech of the charlatan dentist on his cart, would respond to the oration of Demosthenes.

One after another, the carriages came down the avenue. Even our neighbors, who were Legitimists at heart, prepared to give a hearty welcome to the man, who, though fallen from the highest position that France could give him, had also banished Louis Philippe. At noon, Lamartine drove into the court. He was accompanied by Ronchaud and Eugene Pelletan. Pelletan, who continued the direction of

the "Bien Public," was already celebrated, by those grand studies in politics and style, to which "La Presse" owes a part of its fortune. I had with me Bruys, Ronot fils, M. Duréault, M. Gormand, Hippolyte Boussin, M. Menand, etc. The weather was cold: a rain-storm was approaching.

"You did not tell me of this fair," said Lamartine to me.

"I did not remember it; but you will have a much larger audience."

"I do not like such an audience as this," he replied. He, then, entered the salon. He had been recognized in passing through the village. The gates were open, and crowds of strangers came down the avenues, inundating the court. The National Guards of Saint-Gengoux, and of Cormatin, which I commanded, formed a half-circle to maintain an open space between the orator and the crowd. I was in uniform, and circulated freely among the different groups, thanking those who had come to take part in the patriotic festival, and happy in the respect that they were paying my old house. The rain had commenced and was falling fast. The people still lingered. Not to prolong the damp condition, Lamartine resolved to hurry matters. He advanced to the centre of the old façade, where the steps of red granite descend to the court, and stood partially protected by the Corinthian portico. The orders

had been violated, and the lines forced. The great staircase was invaded, and already twenty heads were at the windows, and men were hanging on the roof. The assault was tumultuous, but how was it possible to refuse entrance to people who wanted to shelter themselves from the rain!

Lamartine was greeted with applause by the National Guards; the peasants saluted; the men from the fair said nothing. I said a few words of welcome to Lamartine, in the name of the country. He replied in his usual cordial manner. He always could say something new on the same question, "*the Republic.*"

In one of his most forcible phrases, a drunken voice interrupted with the growl. "Down with the forty-five centimes!" Another voice, probably better paid, took up the refrain, with, "Down with the Republic! Down with Lamartine!" Finally there was a chorus of unknown and scattered voices crying, "Long live the Emperor!" a cry only appropriate to the battle field of Waterloo.

For a moment Lamartine looked as if he had stepped on a serpent, but not wishing to excite a disturbance he feigned not to have heard and continued.

I was exasperated to hear such a cry and demonstration, at my house. If I could have judged the miscreants at that moment, I should have dealt without mercy.

The indifferent and doubting, asked in low tones, "The Emperor! What Emperor?"

The National Guard made a movement. Dixmier had difficulty in restraining his men, who charged upon the offenders with their bayonets. For a moment it seemed as if there would be blood-shed.

Lamartine finished by a magnificent profession of Republican faith, which called forth a salvo of applause. But the desire to punish the offenders of our peace was paramount.

The Bonapartist resumed, "Down with the Republic! Long live Napoleon!" The same cry came timidly from two or three windows.

It was evident, that this was a premeditated stroke. The man at Ham had prepared it. His mercenaries had lanced the odious name of Napoleon to try for a vibration. Their departure was a little accelerated by threatening feet, and they disappeared in the crowd.

The men from the fair had been well paid, and had drank freely at the shops. They held possession of the windows, corridors and stairs. At the least complication the house might be sacked. They continued their cries of "Long live Napoleon!" with a scorn, according to rule, as if to disconcert Lamartine, my guests and myself, by their infamous discordance.

I felt responsible and started to do my duty as



proprietor. Pelletan and Boussin were equally furious, but had more prudence than I, and restrained me. The rain ceased. The men finding themselves very comfortable at the chateau, persisted in their coarse laughs and songs, in which politics had ceased to take part. No one recognized an inhabitant of the canton among them. They were itinerant peddlers, evading the law, begging everywhere, showing obscene pictures to the boys and girls of the village, sowing seeds of immorality and iniquity in these moving bazars, and corrupting the public in every evil way. The Bonapartist gold had slipped into their soiled hands. They appropriated it deceitfully for they soon substituted a song in praise of Mandrin, instead of proclaiming the name of Napoleon. They paraded at the attic windows, they invaded the staircases, and soon pervaded the whole house. The patience of the guardians of order and the Republic, was at last exhausted. The worthy peasants indignantly joined us, and a solid phalanx mounted by another passage and advanced with energetic cries, of "Long live Lamartine!"

The corridors were cleared in two minutes, and the offensive band fled, to finish its refrains elsewhere.

The honest people alone, remained.

An attempt at Bonapartist Jacquerie had been crushed. Lamartine shook many loyal hands, and we drank a glass of wine in the name of Liberty.



The last flourish of trumpets saluted all that remained of the Provisionary government.

Lamartine was very sad, in spite of his effort to appear cheerful. I was more so than he. I blamed myself. I ought to have considered that a fair is an incessant excitement, where the peasant loses the serenity that results from his peaceful labors. I felt that, henceforth, Cormatin would be an accursed spot, and asked Lamartine's pardon, for having unwittingly drawn him into a snare.

He led me back into the grove, which had been the scene of many confidences. We were alone with Pelletan, and Boussin.

"The evil comes from afar," said he "Cavaignac will not be nominated President."

"I hope not," interrupted Pelletan, looking at Lamartine.

"I, too," he replied. "The Empire begins in my own department. The name of Bonaparte has only found a few echoes to-day. In fifteen days a thunder will reply, and the story of blood will be retold. Bonaparte is as eternal as death. I said so when the fool was recalled. Man can only make outlines. I have made a rough sketch, and designed the fresco of the Republic. It will be effaced by the finger of an adventurer, but it is sure to reappear. You will all be Representatives under the Third Republic. I shall be sleeping then, under the sod. Put some

compassion into *your* Republic, if you want it to endure. Now, let us go and amuse ourselves," he added in a tone of forced gaiety.

He only half amused himself. He was very serious. This symptom saddened him, more than he would acknowledge. He made an effort not to communicate his depression to us, and was full of cordiality for all.

The table was full. Lamartine related a few episodes of his Government. My legitimist neighbors, whom I had invited at his request, to make a fusion of politics, listened with astonishment. They could not comprehend a *nobleman*, who had decreed universal suffrage and democracy. How was it? He owned vineyards as they did. He kept his horses, dressed well, had a distinguished air, and yet he was a Republican. His family piqued themselves upon their fine manners, and when the opportunity was so favorable, he did not recall Henry V. It was disgraceful!

Always the argument of the "chateau," to which I alluded a little while ago. Fortunately these gentlemen did not dare to think aloud. They saw before them a man who was moulding history.

Lamartine did all that he could to destroy the shameful impression of the morning. I remember his charming reply to Pelletan, who told him of one of his acquaintances, an invalid, living near by with a lady who had bequeathed him two million francs.

"Two million!" replied Lamartine. "That is worth a thousand crowns."

This gave an impulse to gaiety. Bruys counterfeited a preacher in the wilderness, taking alternately the English and German accents. This was a sure sign of exuberance of spirits. Pelletan talked like a master, to the great astonishment of the nobility, who did not like to admit that a mere journalist had so much taste and moderation.

We smoked around a bright fire, with conversation still brighter. Those living at a distance, did not ask for their carriages until after Lamartine had gone to bed. After all had departed, I went up to the village. The wound of the morning was still rankling. The cafés were open, on account of that cursed fair. I made diligent inquiries, and finally got proofs of a plot. If Caussidière had been there, he would have found something to do.

The individuals in great coats, who had displayed their money so freely in the morning, were unknown. The workmen in blouses, who had cried "Vive Napoleon!" had come from certain villages, under the influence of Chapuis Montlaville. He, Chapuis, had served all the ultra-monarchists first; then, during the last years of Louis Philippe, the extreme left had had the foolishness or weakness to admit him. The Republic honestly offered him nothing, and so he turned to Bonapartism. He had just organized a campaign

in his Canton, against the "forty-five centimes." He was preparing for the tenth of December, and a Prefecture. The Prefecture came with the Reaction. Bonaparte in making his imperial journey, took a bath at his house. Chapuis Montlaville sent a vial of the water to all the mayors of his department, as Chateaubriand had brought home a vase of water from the Jordan where Christ had been baptized—A month later, Chapuis Montlaville was Senator.

There are several droll stories about him.

The fifteenth of July 1830, he was journeying in Switzerland. When he registered his name at the hotel, he wrote :

"The Baron and Baroness de Montlaville, and Suite."

The fifteenth of August, he returned to the same village.

The Revolution was then reigning in France.

He wrote on the same leaf:

"Chapuis, wife and servant.

This attempt at a Bonapartist riot at Cormatin, undoubtedly, emanated from him.

Having solved the problem, I endeavored to encourage the people, and succeeded. The next day, when Lamartine passed through the village, his carriage was greeted by cries of "Vive Lamartine!"

But the miasma was in the air.

## XII.

### *Autumn at Saint-Point.*

ONE morning in the autumn of 1848, I cannot now recall the date, I was at Saint-Point. The sun was drying the mists of the valley and the feathers of the peacocks that were pluming themselves in the court, as we went out from the house, and ascended the hill, through the newly-planted vines. The ladies fearing the heat, did not accompany us. Lamartine foreseeing an attack of rheumatism, hoped to prevent it by the sun.

The carrier had arrived, and we took with us a pile of unopened newspapers. The dogs bounded gaily at our side. We reached that part of the forest, which had been sold. Only a few grand trees were preserved, as a peristyle, for a future grove. Lamartine sat down on the ground, with his feet in the sun, and his head shaded. We went from tree to tree, as the sun advanced. The conversation, or monologue accompanied us. I have seldom seen him more felicitous. Chateaubriand's "Mémoires d'outre-tombe" were appearing in "La Presse." I asked his impressions. He did not like to be questioned upon Chateaubriand in public. Those who

did not know his unconsciousness of self, too apparent sometimes, would have suspected a rivalry between them.

"Entre nous," said he, "Chateaubriand has done more evil than good to his age. The superstitions and mummeries of Catholicism, stifled by the great breath of the Revolution, and fallen into their own dust, are raised again by some sort of phantasmagory of color, in his "*Genie du Christianisme*."

"The newly-placed idols will retard the march of reason, by the genuflexions they will demand, and by their height, will hide the face of God. Chateaubriand's style is only a magnificent mechanism. Not a page has the true light of inspiration. The tints are as false as the light on the student copy-book from the class-room lamp. I have re-read *Atala*, and laughed over it as much as I wept at eighteen. I feel reproached for having fascinated women, by unconsciously imitating this inflated style. Chateaubriand has never been natural. Listen!"

Lamartine took "*La Presse*" and read aloud one of those remarkable chapters on the campaign in Russia, where hatred to Bonaparte is justice and eloquence. The reader was carried out of himself, and read as if improvising ;

"Very well. Yes!" said he, when the article was finished. "It is as beautiful as Saint-Simon or Machiavelle. Here is a pillory erected in the snow, and



the Emperor, pale and wan will remain fastened there in history. These "*Memoires d'outre-tombe*," are the only serious work of Chateaubriand."

"There are a dozen volumes," said I.

He re-read the article quietly. I saw his chest heave. The artist was filled with mute admiration.

He wished, however, to justify his first opinion, and recited from memory, an homage certainly, a stilted page from "*Le Natchez*."

"I prefer *Mme. de Staël*," he added, "she is more of a man."

From the Revolution of '89, where we commenced, the conversation turned to the Revolution of February, which was so recent. I asked cautiously, if he had not compromised the Republic in refusing the Provisionary Dictatorship, that the majority would have imposed upon him in March and May.

"Most certainly, I should have caused the democracy to rule," he replied, "but I should have been obliged to have two scaffolds. One on the right, for M. de Montalembert, and another on the left, for Blanqui. You know what I think of the inviolability of human life, and of the durability of governments by terror. I want to leave a proof, that the Republic is only another name for clemency, and brotherly-love. The Republic, I should then have tried, would have lasted two years. That which is to come, will endure for centuries."



He did not say, *always*. This contemplator, and student of history, did not believe in the uninterrupted movement of progress. He recognized times of reaction. He judged from exhumed ruins that the civilization of India and Assyria had been as near perfection as ours; that Nineveh and Babylon had enclosed as many wonders as Paris; that the Republican soul of Cicero had had no less light than Mirabeau's; that truths are lost and found again in the march of ages; that it was rash to affirm that Confucius was not equal to Montesquieu, and that humanity had not been bathed in as much light in the morning of our globe, as in the evening.

He never abandoned this grandiloquent paradox.

I questioned him, for the twentieth time, about his colleagues of the Provisionary Government, and especially about Louis Blanc.

"Louis Blanc," said he, "is a star upon which rests only one cloud. The social question cannot be solved in a system. It is the mother question of all improvement, the eternal contemporary of sorrow, and will only be resolved by fragments. I am a socialist, too, as I have proved in my first stammerings upon a Rational Policy; but I do not comprehend specialists among curers of wounds that will never heal. Louis Blanc has shaken opinion and disturbed our attitude by throwing over our little group the drapery of a Thesis. I know very well, that only a broad ex-

pansive charity exists in him. I have never found a grain of ashes on the hearth of that sympathetic soul. The eternal flame of good has passed from the heart of Beccaria into his own; and a sanctuary is always needed for such lights. Louis Blanc is an admirable writer, and if he sometimes hesitates as an orator, it is because the working of his conscience makes him see many phases of truth. But he is firm and upright upon all important questions. None of my friends have aided me more than he in the abolition of capital punishment. Every word that he uttered was baptized in courage, and conviction.

He has had as much as I to do with sweeping the shadow of the guillotine from the soil of the Republic. One half of the preambles of the decree belong to him. He has not permitted one drop of the blood of 1793 to fall upon the date of 1848. And in this way he is mine, and I hold out my arms to this apostle in his exile. If there are some doubtful notes in his mind, they always resolve into the right chord when they touch the sounding board of this heart of gold. I see him always as at the Hotel-de-Ville. When I proposed the decree for the abolition of capital punishment for the first time, there was a unanimous consent, but Dupont de l'Eure raised some objection as to the manner of proceeding. The decision was adjourned. Very early the next morning, Louis Blanc returned trembling with indignation and wrath.

He ran round the table with his newspaper in his hand. The royalists had given the day when we would revive the guillotine. We fell into each others arms, and voted enthusiastically. Louis Blanc will always vote in this way."

Lamartine talked for a long time. I repeat his words almost exactly, for they still vibrate in my memory. My illustrious and dear colleague Louis Blanc, will pardon me for recalling a criticism, which gives so much sincerity to praise, and he will rejoice to know that he has so firm a friend on the other side of the veil. The sun, which had been declining during this speech, now shone directly in our faces. Lamartine rejoiced in it. He loved to have heat and light in great floods. He believed himself meridional, because he had had his most beautiful romance in Italy, and he always saw the sun near the trellis of Ischia, through the beautiful black hair of Graziella. Mme. de Lamartine, who foresaw these ecstasies had given me an umbrella to shield his head. He pushed it away, laughing.

"Go on, my dear fellow. Strip me. The place is propitious. We are all alone in the woods. Rob me of my recollections. I will not cry for help."

"If I were older, I would ask you for an absolutely intimate confidence," said I.

"Ask it. 'Tis so warm, I shall not be afraid to

throw off one of my garments. I will show myself to you as naked as an Abencérage."

"Or as a god of Olympus."

"O, that is bad. 'Tis too easy to say, with your admiration."

"My respectful friendship."

"Too short a friendship. Come, let us have this great question."

I mused a moment, finally, I said.

"How is it that from the summit of your literary glory, you have plunged into the unknown current of politics? You did not know your strength. You did not know whether your voice, only accustomed to sing in solitude, would resound well on the marble of the tribune. If you had not been Lamartine, you might have diminished yourself, by this elbowing in the crowd. You have been more than successful, but was it not a bold step!"

"Let us go and take a walk?" said he rising, and not replying directly.

His silence seemed like a lesson. We walked towards the woods. He looked sadly at the falling trees that he had been forced to sell. The neighboring peasants had been enlisted as wood-choppers. As we passed through the group, they recognized Lamartine, but the worthy men knew how much he suffered in seeing his mountain stripped, and respecting his grief, did not accost him.

The moment that we turned aside into the path, one of the youngest of them, taking his pipe from his mouth cried, "Vive la République!" It was re-echoed from every mouth, and resounded through the clearing. Lamartine acknowledged it, and disappeared. There was a smile on his face.

"Now you see why I have gone into politics," said he. "Happily chance has given an answer to a difficult question. I felt myself more than you can think, I needed to be in action, as much as a horse needs to leave his pasture for the road. I said to myself. 'Meditations, on the borders of a lake, do not make a whole man.' I was irritated with my claim upon literary glory, which kept me from being taken as a serious combatant, and from that came my puerile imprecations against my verses. I wanted to go into the river, where I felt sure that I could swim. I wanted to carry to my Master at the end of my days, an accomplished action. And I had another ambition. I wanted by my example to lead the most humble before the face of truth. Words thrown on the wind, sow ideas. Ideas are germs of facts. These peasants seeing me to-day, utter the cry of Liberator. I have succeeded. The harvest is ripening, and I am paid a hundred fold for my sweats at the Hotel-de-Ville."

I took his hands in mine, and we descended the hill. This great man's teachings were as simple and

unpremeditated as the parables in the Gospel. I have thought much of this. There ought to be a Bible written on the Acts of Lamartine. But he alone could do it, and Death has arrested his hand.

The ladies were waiting for us in the court, at the dining-room door. It was late.

"What have you been doing all this time, Alphonse?" said Mme. de Lamartine.

"We have been talking nonsense," he replied. "There is nothing in the world so good as that."

### XIII.

#### *Reminiscences.*

I LOOK around among all the loved, and remarkable faces that I have seen at Lamartine's, or that recall a single incident of his life, for the man is only complete by his surroundings, as Socrates still exists through his disciples. I find all these faces at the National Assembly. We are the protective phalanx of Order and Liberty, who have sworn to defend our principles, at all hazards, only through the Republic. Almost all who came near Lamartine, received from him the breath of regeneration. We have brought away a fragment of the sword broken in his hand.

Lamartine's friends bear him witness. Ducuing was one of the regular visitors. His manly face, recalling an antique medallion by its varied expressions, announced his opinions beforehand. Some people show themselves, pre-eminently, as knights; others, as citizens. Ducuing was both, Citizen of a mild Sparta, and knight of the people. He was known to Lamartine through his solid studies of political economy. When Mirès came to Lamartine to propose founding the "Pays," a newspaper that has completely changed its character since the Cassagnacs



have been its directors, Lamartine made an absolute condition that Ducuing should be associated with him.

"I have a pen of gold, perhaps," said he to Mirès, who was to furnish the funds, "but Ducuing has a pen of iron, and I want it on the paper."

Ducuing, in spite of his youth, and his admiration for Lamartine, never laid aside his frankness.

One day, he came into the master's study without being announced, where he found Mme. de Lamartine in tears. Usually she reserved her griefs for her private apartment, and she never wept on her husband's account. She rose and left the room without saying anything, as Ducuing entered.

"Never get married, Ducuing, and do not let a woman see too closely into your life," said Lamartine, "the best of them will lead you into difficulty. I defy you to find a better woman than Mme. de Lamartine, and yet you have witnessed a crisis in our conjugal felicity. It is odious!"

Ducuing came forward, with his honest manly face, "I do not know what the question was," said he, "but Mme. de Lamartine has cried, and I am sure that you are wrong."

"Come and dine with us this evening," resumed Lamartine taking up his pen, and changing the conversation. At seven o'clock, harmony was restored in the household. At each turn in the conversation Lamartine would say:

“It is useless to appeal to Ducuing, Marianne. He always agrees with the ladies. They have spoiled him.” This kind of good-humored revenge lasted a month. During that time, Ducuing increased the circulation of the paper to a degree, that was not compensated later, even by the gold of the imperial purse.

I also find on the same seat with me in the Assembly, and with a ballot of the same color in his hand, Edmond Adam, upon whom Lamartine depended during the revolutionary days of the Hotel-de-Ville. He was one of the firmest in upholding the flag of the republican order. Once, when he had subdued a tempest by his wise and eloquent words, Lamartine embraced him, and called him his son. This accolade was a more noble decoration than the Cross of the Legion of Honor, which he refused from the insolent Empire.

Many years after the scenes in the drama of the Hotel-de-Ville had become historical, Lamartine had some business transactions with Adam, who was then, secretary-General of a banking-house. The great man showed himself a great child. He had some money deposited in the bank, and went to Adam to have it sent to Mâcon in gold.

“I am going away in a few days. I owe the money to my vinedressers. Make haste, and send it in gold.” “Nothing will be easier than to give

you credit there," said Adam. "Gold is not a rare article. The transportation and insurance will cost a great deal. I will send it in paper."

"I want the gold to come from Paris. The vine-dressers do not dare to spend it, and it will be a fortune to them."

"But allow me to repeat, that the expense will be considerable."

"Bah! said Lamartine, 'I sold a romance, last Monday to the 'Constitutionnel.' I was four days in writing it. Next Saturday, they will pay me ten thousand francs.'"

Though perfectly exact, it was an absurd statement to make before a crowd of clerks, who had assembled to watch his departure.

His generosity was often mistaken for pride, and his prodigality for avarice.

*"L'or pur que sous mes pas semait sa main prospère,  
N'a point payé la vigne ou le champ du potier."*

he says somewhere. Alas! the gold gained by his genius has too often paid for the vine.

Emmanuel Arago had been sent to Lyons as Prefect, the second day of the Republic. There was a Lyonnais tempest as well a Parisian. Arago entered the city unknown, with the same qualities that we find he still possesses—a rare fertility of argument, a thrilling and inexhaustible voice to send these arguments into the crowd, and moreover an hereditary

conviction and natural inclination to Order. Under the fantastic though not reassuring name of "Voraces," he was obliged to allow a battalion to organize, whose rays, and clamors rendered many unforeseen services to the public peace.

He could write an amusing and telling book upon his government at Lyons, but he tells it so often, and with so much imagination that probably he never will write it.

One morning a multitude besieged the Prefecture. A company of weavers were seen coming down from "la Croix Rousse." The red flag crossed the bridge, and it seemed as if the city would be given up to the violence of demagogues.

Emmanuel was haranguing fiercely on the square.

A man came to him, saying in a low tone.

"Citizen Arago. I have just come from Paris. Here is a letter from Lamartine."

The Prefect did not cease speaking, while he read the letter. It was written with a pencil, and simply signed, "L." The writing was firm and clear, and there was only one line. Here it is in its dark laconicism;

"Friend, hold out as long as you can at Lyons. We are overpowered here. To-night, the hand that writes to you, will be cold."

Arago had no doubt of the authenticity of the style or writing. Such a declaration from the ac-

credited chief of the government, announcing his approaching death, was not very encouraging to the speaker, but he continued, drawing his energy as it were, from the source of discouragement and defeat.

A few months after, Arago was nominated Minister-Plenipotentiary, at Berlin. Before his departure, he went to the Minister of Foreign Affairs for instructions. Lamartine was confined to his bed with an attack of rheumatism. He thought that he knew all the courts of Europe, but his state officers sometimes deceived him.

“At Potsdam, you will meet the charming and leading head of Berlinois politics. It is the Princess Royal. A little active body, brown and nervous, sympathizing with liberal ideas, and conducting all the diplomatic corps by her charms—in fact, she is one of those mythical princess we read of in the tales of Hoffman or Goëthe. Fall in love with her. It will be an advantage to France.”

Emmanuel actually thought that he had a prospective romance. There was nothing to do in Prussia, but to be presented to Queen Mab,—who was Augusta. The same Augusta of those letters from Versailles, through which her husband sent the daily temperature of France.

She was tall, cold and imposing, as straight and stiff as a weather-beaten column of a Lutheran Church, blonde as the froth of the national beer, and

utterly irresponsible to any words of love. Except for these few shades of difference, the portrait drawn by Lamartine fitted the frame exactly.

Lamartine laughed heartily at the joke, when Emmanuel related it. Such a princess, as *he* saw, might have contracted an alliance between France and Russia.

Instead of listening to Arago, Augusta dreamed of the model of the Krupp gun that her husband had shown her. In the breweries of Bonn, she had already caught a glimpse of the young student Bismarck.

These pages are not all of politics.

There was Adolphe de La Tour, of whom I have spoken in connection with the history of the "Bien Public," a friend of Emmanuel Arago and mine also. Lamartine, who might have helped him more in politics, appreciated keenly his rare qualities, and devotion to true ideas, which so plainly marked him for a political life. In the Republican clubs of 1848 no one was better listened to, than he, and he would have been one of the surest counsels of the National Assembly, though at the time to which I allude, we had only the *shadow* of the Republic in our hopes.

Adolphe de La Tour invited M. de Lamartine twice a year, to dine with him. His apartment was a perfect museum. The dinner though charming, was only a pretext. The evenings were almost



always spent at the "Variétés," or at the "Palais Royal." The noble head of the poet and future regulator of the Republic, was enframed in one of the proscenium boxes of the Opera Bouffe.

Lamartine laughed heartily at the witticisms of Oudry and Arnal. In listening to Potier, he threw aside his great cares for the time, and was as merry as in the youthful days of Graziella.

Leon Bruys d'Ouilly, Champvans and I were the only guests and for the moment mirth made us the equals of this great man.

He had that exquisite familiarity belonging to the eighteenth century, and the beginning of the Restoration, of which we only saw the remains. The *pun*, that contortion of the tongue, always reduced him to silence. He could not bear jugglery except in action, and could not comprehend a jest that was not taken directly from nature. Often he withdrew into the recesses of the box where his conversation attracted us. A chance word would lead him to philosophy, or politics. I have heard him discuss the fortifications of Paris, in as masterly fashion as if at the tribune, while Mlle. de Esther Bongars was permitting herself to be embraced on the stage. I remember one of his charming sayings between the acts at the Palais Royal. He was engaged in publishing a new edition of his works, and told us that he had spent three thousand francs that morning, in



advertisements. We exclaimed against the extravagance. "What would you have me do?" he replied. "God himself needs some one to ring the bells for him."

If our memories had been stenographs, what a dazzling collection of his pleasant sayings, we might have had.

Lamartine's jests were not of the same coinage as Voltaire's and Rivarol's. They bore their own stamp and had a higher value. There was so much in him that he seldom quoted others.

The ingenious hospitality of de La Tour made many amusing evenings for Lamartine, and he repaid us with a good humor, which was as eloquent as his genius. His greatest effort of courtesy was to prolong the entertainment; however, he never went beyond ten o'clock. We left with him, and often it was necessary to break through the crowd, for the report that Lamartine was in the hall was always enough to attract the multitude who watched for his departure. This curiosity was not agreeable to him, and often deterred him from going to places that he was not in the habit of visiting.

He was then living at rue de l'Université, and when the weather was pleasant, he walked home. He would accept a cigar for companionship, but seldom smoked, as it was not his time.

Crossing the bridge would suggest a song that he

had heard on the quay at Margellina, or at the fête of "Pie de Grotta." It was more the suspicion of a song, than an actual humming, but we were always glad to see content place her light crown upon his head, if only for a moment. Heavy cares were to be engraven there, too soon.

One of the men who did most to lighten his cares and whom it would be unjust to forget in this respected list of friends, was Garnier-Pagès. He often came with his son-in-law M. Dréo, my friend and associate. Lamartine and he would go over their recollections of the Government of February, and imagine themselves in the same stirring scenes of patriotism and courage.

"If the Republic could always be personified in such men as Garnier-Pagès." Lamartine has often said to me, "it would be still more contemptible not to adore it."

Notwithstanding my sympathy for Garnier-Pagès, I used to think that Lamartine ought to have been more general.

The group seen on the steps of the Hotel-de-Ville, in which we saluted Dupont de l'Eure, Louis Blanc, Mârrast, Arago, Ledru-Rollin, and Flocon, has entered history, with an unparalleled escort of virtue, eloquence, intellect, science, and disinterestedness and its provisional government will be eternal.

## XIV.

### *Pecuniary Troubles.*

ONE morning in September 1848, I went to Saint-Point. Lamartine said to me,

"I have a new secretary. You will like him. I will introduce you."

He took me up stairs, where a young man, with regular features and cold haughty eyes, sat before a table that was covered with proofs. Lamartine introduced us.

This was Paul Saint-Victor.

In his first conversation, I recognized a future master of style. He was a finished critic in literature, and art. His sentences, even when figurative, were clear and concise, and young as he was, a satirical eloquence showed his predisposition. His speech had in it the same ring and resonance that are found in his writings to day.

I have passed many a pleasant evening with him at Saint-Point and at Monceaux, at the fireside, when all the household had gone to bed.

He told me of a book that he was preparing, on Beau Brummel, whom he slightly resembled. He made the impossibility of warmth and faith in scep-

ticism, a reality. He never was mistaken in his vocation. He often would say,

“My ambition is to write a play.”

This, he has been doing for the last twenty years, only, each play is a book, and each book is a masterpiece. I have an irrefutable proof that he is not so impassive as the envious say. Lamartine had just written that incomparable lament called, “*Père Dutemps*.” He read it to me in Saint-Victor’s presence. In the evening when we were alone. Saint-Victor said to me.

“Let us read ‘*Père Dutemps*’ again.”

He turned to that page, which contains the greatest compassion that can enter the heart of man, and is the sublimity of sadness. He could not continue the reading. Tears choked his voice. And yet, he had made six copies for the papers. I have not forgotten those tears, if Saint-Victor has. I hold them in tender memory, for they honor him.

Saint-Victor seemed to have an affection for me.

In Paris, when we left Lamartine’s at noon, we often met Pelletan. How many long walks we had in the gardens of the Luxembourg, and in the Champs Elysées, where one was the peripatetic philosopher, and the other, the marvellous sophist. Suddenly, and without a cloud coming between us, our acquaintance ceased. I was ready then to love him, and I have never ceased to admire him.

That day at Saint-Point, he was doing a humiliating work. Lamartine had just written almost breathlessly. "*L'Histoire de la Revolution de 1848.*" It was too soon. The events were not sufficiently cold. One would have said, that he felt the need of justifying his heroism, but there was another motive in this precipitation of which I speak. A curious idea had taken possession of him a reform in punctuation. He found that periods often interrupted the flow of a phrase and thought that when the idea was not completely finished, the new sentence should begin with a small letter.

Saint-Victor was charged with this subtle modification which, after all, Lamartine subsequently renounced. At that time as I say, Saint-Victor was erasing capitals from the proofs and the work irritated him.

"This will drive me crazy," said he, "I have already fifty pages to revise, and ten thousand semicolons to put in."

I offered to aid him. It was a great labor. The interest of the book constantly distracted us, and after reading a page, we were obliged to go back and correct. We talked too. I asked him, if he had an idea of going into the diplomatic corps, under Lamartine's influence, as was the report.

"No," said he, "I am happy enough in serving, disinterestedly, a great man who has fallen. Besides

the dictator of a few months ago, could not give the position of tobacconist to-day. Genius has no credit with the mediocrity in power. And, moreover Lamartine is a ruined man."

He looked thoroughly convinced of this. I had heard warnings of this catastrophe so many times, that I was indignant.

"You are not yet accustomed to the tone of this house," said I. "M. de Lamartine proclaims his ruin every morning, at the breakfast-table, before his servants, whom he pays regularly, and five minutes afterwards, he will give five hundred francs to any one who will ask for it."

"If I seem to speak indiscreetly to you, whom I do not know, it is because you are devoted to him even to death, and because I have seen this misfortune in all its enormity. You are in a better position than I to risk advice. Some one must prevail upon M. de Lamartine, not to buy any more wine, and to spend only his income. This book has brought ten thousand francs," added he, showing me the proofs, "and would be worth quite as much, without the reformed punctuation."

The conversation continued full of solicitude.

I insert here a parenthesis to tell what I know of the many ways, which led so fatally to misfortune.

Lamartine had five sisters, and the paternal patrimony was very restricted. He was rich, not on ac-

count of his talent but by right of primo geniture, through the legacies of his aunts and uncles bequeathed to him during a period of twenty years. It mattered not to these clingers to the ancient régime, that the heir was celebrated. All they thought of, was the perpetuity of the name. Is it *continuing* a name, when one adds to it in such enormous proportions? This once humble family of gentle folks, was now known all over Europe. This was only a secondary consideration to Lamartine's ancestors.

These donors were no benefactors. Each transmitted domain was taxed with a fabulous number of legacies to all the sisters, and nieces. Lamartine increased them. The land was sold, and the receipts were seldom sufficient to pay the charges. Lamartine borrowed; thus, the more his ancestors enriched him, the more they ruined him. The heart was the constant destroyer of the fortune.

These little provincial nobles were a singular caste, throughout the kingdom. They knew enough of light poetry to quote to a pretty partner, over the game of Boston.

Whatever might have been their religious theory, their practice was exceedingly narrow. They were positively ignorant of the Gospel, and laughed immoderately over the Catechism.

They sent their nephews to the Jesuitical school, and their nieces to the little convent. They held



their family name in profound respect, but it all concentrated in the eldest son. The younger sons were sent out into the world to care for themselves, and they never murmured. So, good and amiable as these ancestors may have been, they were no less destroyers. The first disaster was the inheritances, which completely failed in their end, and the second was the great prodigality, and insatiable generosity of the heir. He felt that he had royal blood in his veins, at a time when kings were not speculators. I never saw him give anything but gold to the poor on the street.

I remember one characteristic, which, though a fault, was frequently repeated.

One day I was in his cabinet, in rue de l'Université. He was reading some important political article and was hurrying to go to the Assembly. His servant brought in a card.

"Here is that—again!" he exclaimed. One of his inherited habits was to swear in private.

"Shall I tell her that you are not here," said I.  
"Who is the woman?"

"A Muse without talent. She annoys me with her Alexandrines. She spends at the theatre all the money that she can extort from fools."

"Send her away," said I.

"That is what I am going to do."

He opened a little closet in the chimney. I saw

a basket full of gold and bank notes. He took one of them of one thousand francs, and gave it to his servant, saying,

“Tell her never to come again, and give this money cautiously.”

This was his mode of sending away importunate people.

The three months of government cost him one hundred and sixty thousand francs. Thus, he surreptitiously disarmed the rioters who were exciting Paris, and sending the Republic to perdition. I understand now why he called himself a lightning-rod.

His last borrowed capital was devoted to public service. And naturally for years, the reactionary newspapers announced that Lamartine had stolen two millions during the time that he had control of affairs. His only foolish expenditure was his voyage in the Orient, and yet he sold the book that he brought back, for one hundred thousand francs. His household expenses was never more than forty thousand francs a year. He owned many horses when he lived in the country, but none of them were valuable. His hospitality was great and incessant; his table furnished abundantly but simply.

His vinedressers brought quantities of fowls and waffles. “I live upon their presents,” he used to say but he never added, that he regularly paid two and three times their value. His personal wants were

very moderate. His charities alone dug the pit that engulfed him, and during his most disastrous years, he would submit to no reduction here.

As a young man, Lamartine's resources were very small, and from the time that he had cared for himself, he had lived side by side with debt. He formed a system from his experience. When his affairs seemed to be in a little better condition he said to me.

"I shall now arrange so as always to have two hundred thousand francs of debt. In individuals as well as in governments, debt is the necessary stimulant to production."

On this subject he was always paradoxical. He, who so rarely admitted that he was a genius in any thing, thought himself a brilliant financier, and this is why, in spite of the many prudent entreaties on the part of his dearest friends, that he never would suffer any interference in his affairs. Friends like Pereire and Mirès, thoroughly disinterested and skilful financial managers; others, experienced administrators, M. Edward Dubois, Charles Rolland, and M. Chamborre proposed twenty times, to reconstruct a fortune out of what remained, with the reservation that he should sell a part of his lands, and that he should buy no more wine from his vintagers.

Lamartine smiled at these affectionate offers, but in his heart, revolted at any intervention between him and debt.

The enormous sums realized from his writings only caused illusions. He always believed that with the next success, which came annually, he would be able to raise the mortgages on his property. He had a superstitious tenderness for his lands. Milly held a large place in his heart, by the recollection of boyhood, and as his birthplace, was sacred to him. Perhaps there was a consciousness of his prodigality in this resolution to preserve his lands. He wanted to leave an inheritance as his uncles had done, as well as a guarantee for his creditors. Meanwhile he loaded himself with mortgages, thinking to raise them by doubling his work. At last, he was forced to sell Milly. It was heart-rending. He thought himself guilty of disloyalty to his tenantry, in giving them another master, and, that he had desecrated the family tombs by giving away his cradle. In 1849 at one of his most critical periods, I heard him refuse to take for Monceaux, three times the sum that was obtained after his death.

There was a sadder reason for his obstinacy than the affection for his lands.

His purchase of wines.

This is the local custom. The proprietors of the Mâconnais, in years of failure, advance money to their vinedressers. This debt is paid by the following vintage, as one half of the product belongs to the vinedresser, and is his capital.

This arrangement is perfectly correct, and irreproachable. Lamartine found that he could borrow no longer. The vintages then became his desperate resource. He bought, sometimes a thousand casks of wine, on credit, at a high price, and sold them for cash, at a loss. In this way he could touch the money at once.

This man, who had shown himself so skilful in adjusting and equalizing the different questions of the constitution: and who was extravagant for all the fine points of honor, never suspected that he was committing an enormity before the law. His consolation for his losses was, that he enriched his villages. The peasants who served him at Saint-Point and at Monceaux are now capitalists.

There were, of course, delays in payment. The interest gradually absorbed more than the income. Lamartine was frightened and hence, the prodigious work of the last twenty years of his life.

Without mentioning "*L'Histoire de la Restauration*," some parts of which are equal to "*Les Girondins*," and is the most forcible argument against the First Empire; nor "*Geneviève*," nor *Raphaël*, two master-pieces; nor "*L'Histoire de la Turquie*," in which we find a biblical Mahomet; nor "*L'Histoire de la Russie*;" he undertook three immense publications. "*Le Conseiller du peuple*," "*Le Civilisateur*," and "*Le Cours de Littérature*." This last

work, thanks to manuscripts left, appeared within a few months. The sale of his works was unparalleled. He was enabled to reclaim some of his lands. But the frost attacked his vines. Every decreasing degree of temperature carried away millions of francs. Creditors began to harass him. Some friend suggested a national subscription, such as England had raised to recompense Cobden and O'Connell. Lamartine was furious.

"*I!*" he exclaimed, "*I!* hold out my hat for pennies! I would rather shoot myself!"

Alas! it was then, as a subterfuge, that he thought of an edition of his works, published by himself, by which he could make a direct appeal to France and America. France, where every literary man already had a complete edition of Lamartine, did not respond well. The Americans as I have said before, had never forgiven him for not coming to see them. The receipts did not cover the expense of publication. Lamartine had a blind confidence in advertisements, and spent immense sums for them alone.

Every succeeding year wore more heavily upon him, still, there were occasional gleams of hope. Turkey was grateful for what he had written about Islamism. He had also spoken on the Oriental question, several times, with marked effect. He liked to believe that he belonged to the pastoral races of the Caucasus, and often said that the best of men inhabited Asia.



The sultan Abdul-Medjid, as a testimony of his gratitude as well as his desire to have a claim upon the West by relieving one of its sons, ceded to Lamartine, in consideration of his misfortunes, a quarter of the province beyond Syria, for a period of thirty years. The poet dreamed of ending his days under the cedars, where David had sung. He invited us, all to emigrate with him, and found a French Colony, under the true sun. In the magnificent concession, he saw ten times the amount of his debts, in France.

"All of you must be more or less involved," said he to us, jestingly. "Come with me. We will divide the promised land."

He sent Charles Rolland, as agent to Constantinople, who acquitted himself honorably in the mission.

Lamartine could not cultivate this newly-acquired territory alone, and an English Company offered to take it, giving three hundred thousand or four hundred thousand francs a year, for the privilege. The Divan was disturbed at the thought of this immigration. He wanted the honor of Lamartine alone, and not a British Association, and consequently, he refused to authorize the company.

M. and Mme. de Lamartine set out for Constantinople. They urged me to go with them. I have always repented not having accepted. I have since seen the Orient, but with Lamartine, it would have



had another color. That journey was unsuccessful. M. de Champeaux died on the voyage. They were obliged to abandon all their hopes upon their arrival at Constantinople, for the Sultan was inflexible. He did not take back the grant, but rented it for twenty years at thirty thousand francs. This price, by exchange, was reduced one-third, and the balance was extremely insufficient for the interests of the debts.

Lamartine had no other resource now, but in financial combinations. We knew that it was not for himself that he sought fortune so perseveringly. The ignorant public condemned him, justly, according to appearances.

I come now to the most lamentable part of his life, where he placed himself in an equivocal position. The abominable seizures of property, by the very men who had lived upon his bounty ; the harsh legal processes of expropriation ; flagrant ingratitude and sordid cupidity, tormented him at every step. He ran from one extremity to another, with incessant appeals for subscribers to the "*Cours de Littérature*," and with the bait of a lottery, that poorly disguised a subscription.

A friend assisted him, materially, in this painful task, and was a witness of the generosity and greatness, remaining in his humiliation and decay. Louis Ulbach may tell, sometime, of that long campaign in mortifications and refusals.

Lamartine was partly to blame, but the most guilty was the country.

Lamartine could not comprehend why the country did not help him in his season of distress, when he had opened his hand so generously for her. He knew at what price of pain, and almost despairing eloquence, he had saved Paris and France by the Republic. He was so free from selfish interest, that I cannot doubt, that in the multiplicity of his appeals, there entered a desire to give his country a chance to wash its hands of ingratitude.

He had, as I have said, an exaggerated ambition to leave an estate to his dear family, and not to cause the loss of a penny to his vinedressers, who were now his creditors.

Thus the vine was his ruin.

As he well said at one time "it was the green cloth of the gaming table."

For ten years, not to die insolvent, this insatiably generous man, who was so abstemious that he could have lived on the vegetables of the Brahmins, with only a simple fire of vine-fagots, by his pen alone, made for himself a reputation for cupidity. This prodigal in alms-giving, this nature so simple in its grandeur, passed for a spendthrift or a miser in the general opinion of the world. We had to submit to the reproaches of outsiders. His justification was

too long and too psychological. Politically it was majestically imposing.

I must tell the truth, not to say justice, of a government even if I hate it.

The Empire offered many times, to pay Lamartine's debts. At first, under condition of accepting a place in the Senate, and the presidency, and afterwards without conditions. Lamartine did not degrade himself by falling into the snare. The Empire was willing that he should be on the opposition.

He refused.

These offers were renewed for several years, and always with exquisite delicacy, for M. de La Guerrière was the mediator. They were made to Lamartine too, in his darkest days. Sick and exhausted by his struggles with his creditors, and conscious of the scornful pity, that he had heaped upon himself, by his useless appeals, he always refused, unhesitatingly, in the same firm voice, and never descended to bitterness to chastise an offensive generosity. He surpassed Cincinnatus in pride, and was still worthy of his great name. Had his name borne only a literary signification, it may be, that he would have sacrificed it to save his creditors, but in it, he caused the Republic of the past to be respected, and preserved the Republic of the future.

The man of February could not be the pensioner of the man of December.

God strikes upon the loftiest height to prove that the most perfect creature does not reach perfection here below, and that other trials await him, before the final purification.

Lamartine, who for thirty years had wrapped himself in all the mantles of fame, showed himself too plainly under the rags of misfortune. He made an exhibition of his misery, and reproached his country as if for a national injustice.

The long years of his old age, were devoted to the feverish pursuit of money, but it was to increase his prodigality by the power of giving more. I must be just to the loyal friends who stood by him. Not one turned from the path of Belisarius. A circle of subscribers were faithful to the *Cours de Littérature*. Although harassed almost beyond endurance, Lamartine never knew material constraint. He reduced his household expenses, considerably, but never renounced his hospitality, nor his charities.

His revenues from Turkey, the modest income of Mme. de Lamartine from England, the *Cours de Littérature*, the books sold, and the vintages from his reduced property, would have made a handsome living for any one else. What remained after paying the first debts, would have been enough for a liquidation. Before his intelligence was clouded, he knew that the event of his death might cause regret, but no one would suffer pecuniarily.

That admirable woman Mlle. de Valentine de Cessiat Lamartine, his niece, has sold the property and paid all indebtedness. By great personal sacrifice, she has bought Saint-Point, where she, hospitably, opens the door to all who come to warm themselves in the home, where once shone the light of a great man.

## XV.

### *Recollections of Paris.*

IN my many gleanings in the furrows of this fertile life, I find numerous sheaves to bring upon these pages, as they come, dry or dead, to my memory.

I do not know the dates of my harvests.

The seeds that I throw to the wind, will germinate in the fields of another, where perhaps the sun will shine more brightly, than on mine.

I want to tell of Lamartine in the streets of Paris, where I often accompanied him. During the sessions, and in the absence of a regular secretary, I was proud to serve him, officially. My duties were limited. I never copied for him. That work was for those whom he could pay. Every day, I replied to five or six letters, which I carried to him the next day to sign. This he often did without reading them. So I have, unintentionally, sent false autographs to many happy individuals, who must have thought that Lamartine had a very poor epistolary style, and an equally poor penmanship.

I have, doubtless, been the cause of many heart-beatings, for almost always my replies were to enthusiastic verses, or collections of poetry sent to the

master. Sometimes they were declarations of love, addressed to the lover of Graziella and Elvira, whispering soul-confidences, to a sexagenarian rejuvenated by their admiration. I have learned from this task, that women especially poetical woman, have a great deal of audacity in their letters.

Lamartine replied to the most private letters himself. Those that I read came from convents where the recluses sighed for liberty, or from provinces, too far away to be compromised by these confessions. It was some Elvira, sitting on the borders of a lake, where the bark of Raphaël never passed, or some Laurence, languishing in the listless shadow of a cloister, where the confessor never recalled a Jocelyn.

Lamartine begged me always to reply to these by generalities and not to be discouraging.

“Ah! if the flower of the soul had two blossomings!” as he says somewhere.

For a poet, he held to a system of good moral and practical sense. He could not take time to read all that was addressed to him, and send back good advice. He would not stimulate mistaken vocations, nor mislead the minds of unknown and sincere young people, by false hopes of becoming poets, nor would he be cold, and unsympathetic to enthusiasts. He either read or listened to the reading of some part of the collection, and then gave me some idea of his real impression. I do not believe that thus I have ever



clipped the wings of a future Apollo, or developed illusions by hypocritical praises in the mind of a candidate, who was not capable of taking a diploma.

Among other masters, Vigny and Béranger have taken much pains to send back a conscientious appreciation, in an article upon the book dedicated to them. I have always had a profound admiration for this exquisite honesty. It is true, that they were not occupied with politics as Lamartine was. When the Assembly was not in session, Lamartine would take me for a long excursion, or for some visits. He always walked until the latter part of his life, when he employed a coupé.

These days were always full of enjoyment. He breathed in his freedom, with full lungs, like a boy just out of school. His visits were returned by card. If he suspected that the lady was at home, he gave me the card, and the concierge would salute me very deferentially, probably, having imagined Lamartine quite a different sort of person. When there was a certainty of absence, he left his name, and expressed his regrets. His true visits were made in the open air. If we met any one whose face was familiar (and whom did he not know?) he would stop for a long time, talking to them. One of those whom we no longer meet, was Major P., the grandson of a great painter, who was, and is yet, one of Lamartine's truest friends. He has been in the United States for

a long time. He is an American of tender and noble character, who has given his best thoughts to Liberty.

He used to be accompanied by a very young girl, whom he introduced to Lamartine with moistened eyes ; the pride of paternity shone in his tender look. His whole conversation was of her and Liberty.

One day we met him alone. He was gloomy and nervous. He walked like one condemned to death. He gave us his confidence. His loyalty had been surprised. A religious emissary had glided into his house, and had stolen his child. Fanaticism had been as merciless, and less excusable than passion. The door of the convent had closed upon that smiling youth. The daughter now loved another, more than her father. God had been given the ferocity of a Don Juan. The evil was without remedy. The vows had been pronounced. The Jesuits had profited by innocence. For a long time, the unhappy man wept without knowing that he was in the street. There was an eloquence in a grief so genuine. Lamartine was more than paternal. He offered to go to that "house of God," where God was so manifestly absent, and bring the stolen lamb back to her fold. A thunder of indignation burst from him, against these impious sequestrations, and bigoted visits from convents. He demanded before heaven, the natural claims of a father. He had all the holy revoltings of

John Huss, and the sarcasm of Luther, against Catholicism. If Major P. could have been consoled, he would have found relief in these words. But a father does not avenge himself upon his child.

He thanked Lamartine, but would not compromise him by a useless intervention. The stone does not hear. Devotion has ears of stone.

I never shall forget this scene. The noisy street ; the strong man bowed down under the unrelenting hand of the Church ; the orator powerful as a Bossuet for combating it, and gentle as a Christ, for curing its evils.

Major P. will pardon me for betraying his sorrow which is still severe, but his unhappiness shows a social danger of which I must warn other fathers.

I often went with Lamartine to visit the studios. As he only went among masters, and desired to meet them, he did not play the game of cards at their door.

Préault was one of his favorites. His broadly sculptured marbles, showed a strong thought, rather than delicacy of outline, but his perfectly chiselled words remain, and make the fortune of those who sell them.

Once he said of Pradier ;

“ He goes every morning to Athens, and comes every evening to rue de Bréda.”

He collected a great many thoughts to unroll before Lamartine, who was no longer brilliant every

day, but would respond with exuberance if the right chord was touched.

Sometimes we went to see Delaroche, and also Gudin, who probably does not remember the young man who used to follow Lamartine. I had a letter of introduction to Delaroche when he was at Rome. I can still see his house in the Pincian quarter, and the little salon where the gallant Monsignori used to search for the sketches of the beautiful ladies and devotees, belonging to a society, which has now disappeared.

M. Delaroche had a great kindness for me, unknown as I was to him, but for Lamartine his welcome was the refinement of good taste. In later years, he modified his style in painting. A few months before his death, which surprised him too soon for great renown, he said to Lamartine ;

“I am busy writing my *Meditations*,” and led him before those marvellous works, relating the New Testament stories in all their biblical simplicity. Lamartine appreciated the inspirations in the manners, and holy homes, but perhaps he did not like the comparison Delaroche had dared to make.

He said to me as we went away ;

“These may be *Meditations*, but Love is the one thing lacking.”

We would, then, go to Adam Salomon's. He always had something to do at Lamartine's. He

walked, and talked art and sculpture, with Mme. de Lamartine. Lamartine promised to give a sitting for a medallion. Salomon also succeeded in gaining a promise for a photograph. Every thing should be pardoned him, for he has modelled the most beautiful bust extant of Lamartine, and sent to the tomb at Saint-Point a fine monumental statue of Mme. de Lamartine. Salomon has always been an artist, and has preserved his individuality, even in working a machine. He has gained a fortune with his camera, and has not spoiled his artistic touch by dabbling with collodium. His greatest success is little known. Lamartine detested a photograph, which he regarded, with some reason, as a negation of thought. Nevertheless, there are photographers who are artists. The fanatically pure and simple, scorn the re-touch. I have always suspected the successful of practising this art in secret. Lamartine, however, liked Adam Salomon very much, although he despised his business beyond measure, and Salomon allowed him to say so.

One day he brought to Lamartine two portraits. They were as delicate, as the canvass of Lawrence, and inspired, as the heads of Ingres.

Lamartine had one hour of delight.

Then Salomon put the pen into his hand, and dictated to him for the "*Cours de Littérature*," a recommendation for his studio of Photography. I

do not believe that any one ever attained a result apparently so hopeless.

In going from Salomon's, we passed by rue Coquenard, now rue Lamartine. I was astonished that the ugliest street in Paris, should bear the most beautiful name in history.

"It is a delightful joke," said Lamartine. "You have often seen a young artist called Turreau, at our friends, Adolphe de La Tour's?"

"Certainly, he was a young man of talent."

"He had the misfortune to live in rue Coquenard. When, pushed to the last extremity, he was obliged to give his address, he used to swear. He tore the leaf, bearing the name, out of his pocket-book. He would not admit that an artist's canvass could be found in such a street. It became a mania with him, and the misfortune was, that he liked his studio, and could not bear to move. February came. He welcomed it with acclamation, but only for personal considerations. It was not the freedom of his country, but his own freedom that he saw. All night of the twenty fifth and twenty sixth he worked. He painted on tin, first, a dark blue ground and then put in white letters 'Rue Lamartine.' Before daylight, he took a ladder, and nailed these plates at every corner of the street. Those who went to sleep in rue Coquenard, awoke in rue Lamartine. There was not a single protestation. My name had more resonance



than that of the poor citizen Coquenard, with whom the reactionary newspapers so amiably confounded me, two months afterwards. I learned of my new glory, the next morning, at the Hotel-de-Ville. My friends laughed heartily, and applauded the substitution. O, unrolling of destinies ! My name is now unpopular, but familiar to the coachmen. All that remains of me, in the Revolution of February, is that I replace M. Coquenard."

Another day we were walking in one of the little streets, now obliterated, leading from the Hotel-de-Ville to Palais Royale.

"Look down that passage," said Lamartine. "I have witnessed an almost incredible scene there. I will tell it to you alone, but after I am dead you may publish it, for it is historical. I would never have spoken of it, if Sainte-Beuve had not attached himself to the Empire, and if he did not insult the men of the Revolution every day. Remember this. It was in the first days of March 1848, when I was drinking in great draughts of popularity, having just escaped the draught of hemlock. I was walking down the square. Every body recognized me, saluted and followed me. Sainte-Beuve was passing, and putting himself in front of the procession, took my arm. He was suspected of clericalism then, though not long after, he went over to Atheism. His monkish face displeased the crowd. I do not know whether he



heard the murmurs, or imagined them. He dragged me along. Night was falling. He pushed me into that passage to hide himself. The people outside were crying, "Vive Lamartine," and "Vive la République," but there were no menaces. Then, I had the most lamentable spectacle. Sainte-Beuve crazy with fear, almost knelt to me, crying, "Save me! You have made them lay down their arms!"

"Yes, I have seen that grace of mind, that elegance of style, that Athenian purist, kneeling on these slimy pavements! Joseph Delorme has kissed my hands!"

This was a painful revelation, and destroyed my past admiration. Sainte-Beuve had a strong talent in a weak character. I give this to the public as I have been commanded and it is important that history should know, that Sainte-Beuve was the only serious man of letters, that the Empire can boast of having seduced.

The house has been destroyed. May the shame disappear from that memory, with the stones that heard his cry!

Sainte-Beuve has made a fine courageous speech in the Senate. His liberalism of the last year has been his repentance. Such repentances are accepted in the heaven of the Republic. Lamartine often went with me to see Adrien Decourcelle, who had dramatized a part of Geneviève. I had the pleasure of in-

roducing them. Lamartine highly esteemed a genius so essentially French, from which was to come that ingenious "*Dictionnaire de Docteur Grégoire*," that might have borne the signature of Rivarol or Sévigné.

I am sure that the recollection of these rare visits are dearer to Decourcelle, than the memory of his most successful representation.

One circumstance brought Decourcelle very near to Lamartine. He had been presented after the success of the drama, but the subsequent interviews were rare ; they were, however, frequent enough to rouse an enthusiasm which soon showed its generosity. It was at the time of the first appearance of the "*Cours de Littérature*." Decourcelle had followed with passionate ardor the consul who had touched gold every where, and had come from Rome with empty hands. He exerted himself, to get subscribers. He came to Lamartine's house, rue de la Ville d'Evêque, and gave Mme. Gresset the price of fifty subscriptions. He was about to give the names, when the astonished Mme. Gresset, not knowing this admirer, insisted upon speaking to M. de Lamartine. Decourcelle was sent for. It may be that Lamartine had not manifested much sympathy for the dramatist of Geneviève, and Decourcelle had noticed it.

"You take fifty subscriptions?" said Lamartine "are they for yourself?"

"I wish that my gratitude could afford such a

luxury," replied Decourcelle, "but I must acknowledge that I have forty-nine friends, who, every month, share with me the pleasure of reading your publication."

"*'Forty-nine!'* The best friend I have, has never brought more than seven. You must have taken a great deal of trouble.'"

"I have run about a little, but the doors have opened easily. I have my 'sesame.'"

Lamartine could not resist kissing the loyal face of our friend, who from that time was among the least platonic and most faithful.

Thus we went on, tasting at all the springs of genial spirits, sometimes at Michelet's, sometimes at Emile de Girardin's but most frequently at M. de Chamborran's and Dupont-White's.

M. de Chamborran, a legitimist and clerical had no point in common with Lamartine except the heart. In spite of the principles separating them, the devotion of M. de Chamborran was strong and true to the end. He was so firm in his faith, that Lamartine always enjoyed their discussions. He, who often converted whole assemblies never could change M. de Chamborran. This fidelity delighted him, and was an unerring augury for other qualities.

M. Dupont-White was writing for the "*Bien Public*" of Paris. His very remarkable articles have since then become books, and have taken a high place.

It is impossible to find the question of Political Economy, treated with more ability.

These two friends followed Lamartine assiduously through life, and follow him in death, though happily we still have them with us.

The "Conseilleur du Peuple," had established intimate relations between Lamartine and M. M. Mirés and Millaud who were the proprietors. M. de Millaud had a capital of five hundred francs, when he proposed the scheme to Lamartine, who helped him gain more than a million to divide with Mirès. In the first degree of fortune, Millaud permitted the luxury of gold-bowed spectacles. Arriving at the top of the ladder he owned a house garnished with the same precious metal.

I often went there, with Lamartine during an afternoon. Mme. Millaud, by her beautiful golden hair, was in harmony with her surroundings. She had a Parisian smile on the lips of an oriental Jewess. Lamartine used to say, that he thought of her as the Queen of Sheba when she went to visit King Solomon.

Coming from Mme. Millaud's, we passed directly by the house of M. Thiers, Place Saint-Georges. I had a great desire to see this illustrious man, which would have been still greater, had I foreseen him on the threshold of a Republic, out of which he will doubtless have the honor of founding an imperishable

edifice. As we passed the gate, Lamartine cast a glance among the trees, but did not enter.

One day when he was in a confidential mood, I said to him.

“Why do you never go to see M. Thiers?”

“We were on the point of exchanging shots at the foot of the tribune at one time, and that rather hinders me from telling Thiers what I think of him.”

“I am always surprised that you read everything that he writes, with so much interest,” said I. “His style is so different from yours.”

“My dear boy, opposites attract. In my younger days, I was only drawn towards the women of the Caucasian race, yet the world made me a descendant of the Celts. Thiers reaches his profundity by his wonderful clearness, and when I spend a part of the night, in reading those pages, as pellucid as the waters of a lake, I am no more ready to come from them, than to come from the waters of Lake Léman into a summer’s sun. Thiers is good sense crystallized. So long as France has such a man, she will not be entirely lost. I am too much of a humanitarian, and he is too much of a nationalist, but let the great crisis come, and his patriotism has the right muscle for raising the country!”

I have always remembered this prophecy and in my voting have felt a confidence imposed by the recollection and a gratitude from the necessity,

Not wishing to forget any one in this review, where no one should be lacking to the rendezvous of admiration and friendship, I come now to the most remarkable.

Events are like dice and often throw men together by chance. I do not think there are many examples of this as striking as the one which I shall relate.

One Sunday morning in 1847, I went, according to habit, to rue de l'Université. Sunday was generally given up to audiences, and I only passed through without staying. I walked through the antechamber and great cabinet, and opened Lamartine's door. There were only three with him, but what a reunion!

Chateaubriand, Béranger and Lamennais. All upon the most intimate footing. Certainly, the three most illustrious, and different men of a contemporaneous period.

In my imagination, I still see the group. Chateaubriand, with his great head, cold and firm, was sitting on a little chair near the window. Béranger heavy and massive, with long white hair, was standing by the mantel-piece. Lamennais half concealed, was almost lost in the corner of the divan, and Lamartine was sitting on his bed, for want of a chair, trying to keep down the grey-hounds, leaping upon him.

If a stranger had been asked which was Chateaubriand, he would have pointed to Béranger, whose



patriarchal forehead might have been the home of the "Genie du Christianisme."

Chateaubriand came from the distant horizons of legitimacy, upon which he often affected to turn his back. Béranger had sung of "Lisette," and unfortunately also of the Empire. Lamennais, a weak though gigantic column of Ultramontanism, at this time represented free thought in its most prophetic expression, and the Revolution in its most absolute Radicalism. He was timid in his sectarian characteristics. Lamartine who pretended to be a Catholic of the Restoration was soon to proclaim the Republic.

There had never been men more separated by their antecedents, and there never could be an intimacy more imposing.

I had not power to open the door entirely. It was a most enviable place for a witness and listener, and I would have given a great deal to have heard what they said. I was then only a child among these old men and frightfully insignificant among men of genius. My poor individuality would have totally disappeared in so much radiance and my great disproportion might have constrained them. I made a sign to Lamartine, who encouraged me to enter. I do not know whether I was courageous or afraid but I closed the door and went away, thus lowering the curtain upon one of the most remarkable scenes of my life.



All were not equal in *genius*, that word is too grand for Béranger, but they possessed in themselves, all the passions of their century.

What could they talk about, without tearing each other? Politics, philosophy or religion?

They harmonized in courtesy, and so the concert could not have a false note.

Certainly, the only sceptic there was Chateaubriand.

## XVI

### *Arranging the Drama.*

IN December 1849, at Cormatin, I received a letter, as follows;

"Come with Boussin, and spend a fortnight at Monceaux. I need you both to write some verses."

Hippolyte Boussin was a young man as talented as he was idle, living in the same village with me, and with whom I have spent my summers and autumns, for the last twenty-five years. His indolence was never visible in politics or friendship.

He was roused at the name of Lamartine, and his trunk was soon ready. We could not comprehend why we were sent for.

The author of the "Meditations" and "Jocelyn" *needed* us to make rhymes!

This enigma puzzled us through the thirty kilometres separating Cormatin from Monceaux. It flattered us too, for from another than Lamartine, we should have felt that there was some subterfuge. The chateau was illuminated. Fragrant odors came from the kitchen. All the stoves sang. A great case marked "Chevet," was in the vestibule. We were invited to the wedding-feast of Gamache. But

the poetry? Were we to write madrigals for the young ladies or was Mme. de Lamartine going to hold a "Cour d'Amours?"

We questioned the servants.

There were no guests at the chateau.

A great table was spread in the dining-room, as when the sisters and nieces were assembled. Lamartine was busy superintending arrangements, and consulting with his butler as to the wines to be served.

"You know that I am ruined," said he, as soon as he saw us.

We knew it only too well, though at that moment appearances were very strongly against it.

"This is what has happened. I have sold "Toussaint l'Ouverture," to Michel Lévy and Mirès for thirty thousand francs."

"You have sold Toussaint?" I interrupted in astonishment. I knew the grandeur and beauties of this drama, and thirty thousand francs seemed almost nothing, and with the added honor of the name of the Founder of the Republic, its value was immeasurably enhanced.

"I have sold him as his old master did," Lamartine replied. "They want to begin rehearsing it, in a month, at Porte-Saint-Martin, and the play is not yet finished. An act and several scenes are lacking. We shall have to hurry. Can you rhyme easily, Boussin!"

I replied for my friend, whose modesty embarrassed him, and guaranteed a facility which hindered him from working.

"Then we will look over the drama," continued Lamartine. "Moderate your ardor, Boussin l'Ouverture. I expect Mirès, Lévy, and Frederick Lemaître this evening."

I was perplexed. I had seen the manuscripts, and felt sure that there were already five acts to the drama.

"Do you want to add a 'tableau?' " I asked.

Lamartine almost colored.

"No, but the fifth act is a little Shakespearian," he replied. "These gentlemen are coming by post, and they ought to be here, by this time."

"Perhaps, they got down at Mâcon to change their dress."

"I hope not. We have every thing ready for them here. Go and see if every thing is right in Frederick Lemaître's room. He is a capricious genius."

The bells sounded in the avenue, and the travelers soon made their appearance. There were four of them; Frederick had brought his son Charles, who was an actor of talent, and had appeared in several dramas with my friend Charles Brot. He died two years ago, of a cruel fever, in the full vigor of manhood. I only knew Frederick Lemaître from having

applauded him in all his representations, since my college days. He was one of the deities of our romantic Olympus. He has been without exception, one of the most dazzling actors of our century, and according to our fathers, could only have been surpassed by Talma. He has created types, which leave an impression in the memory as distinct, as the medallions we find in the museums. He has transcended every possibility, in his impersonation of the "Joueur," "Kean," "Richard Darlington," and "Buridan." He rises to such a lyric height in "Ruy-Blas," that he seems to improvise the immortal verses of Victor Hugo, and the next day personifies, in a character of scarcely respectable caprice, the greatest audacity and impudence to be found in a class of speculators. Since that time the Bourse has had an unenviable reputation, and all the efforts of honest men cannot wash out its stains.

There were the notes of a seraph in Frederick's voice, and eloquence in every gesture. He has made more feminine hearts beat than ever did Don Juan.

I recalled all this, as I saw him enter the gallery at Monceaux. Don Caesar de Bazan, dressed in a blue coat for the occasion, did not hold himself very firmly on his legs. Lamartine intimidated him. Mirès followed. I must acknowledge, that so near the author, one did not dream of Robert Macaire. His relations with Lamartine, were through the "Con-

seigneur du Peuple." He felt that he was needed and yet was not at ease, in a house where "contre-marches" were not sold.

In spite of his acuteness, he neither foresaw his immense fortune, nor his disasters, nor that he, a Jew, would support the Pope, nor that his daughter would marry a duke, nor that after, apparently having made many dupes among his share-holders, his courage and good-humor, in the face of those overwhelming suits, which the more guilty escaped, would be worth to him just as many faithful friends as he had victims. He was more than loyal, in all his relations with Lamartine. As I have said, he offered to put himself at the head of Lamartine's affairs, and he would have saved him. He loved Lamartine passionately, and there was almost a tenderness in the contracts he made, and in the payments.

Many, undoubtedly, have gone through life more scrupulously, but with fewer desires and efforts to make themselves better.

The third comer, who was to amass a fortune also, was the great publisher, Michel Lévy. By paying only the price of small pastries for books, he had driven all the romances into the newspapers. Observing my intimacy with Lamartine, and knowing, too, that I wrote, he offered his services, as publisher.

Six months later, I proposed to him, to publish the romance "Henri de Bourbon," which had much

increased the circulation of "*L'Evènement*." M. Michel Lévy scarcely recognized me, and apparently had forgotten his imprudent offer. Not so very imprudent, after all, for the romance, under the title of "*Le dernier Roi*," has passed through several editions.

Lamartine led his guests to their rooms before dinner, and here was the first incident. Frederick announced that he would sleep at Mâcon, and would come to Monceaux every morning. All observations upon derangement and loss of time were useless.

Lamartine could insist no longer. He suspected a travelling companion. But it was something else. Mirès and Lévy accepted the entire hospitality. Lamartine was very happy, and made all his guests feel at ease. Gaiety was in order. Soon another incident occurred, to disturb the serenity. Frederick was drinking water. The reports concerning him were false.

Lamartine passed him the wine of Lebanon and Cyprus, of which he was so proud.

"I drink wine only in "*Lucrezia Borgia*," replied Frederick, who appeared strangely preoccupied.

Mme. de Lamartine believed the reports, and she said, "Perhaps, you are in the habit of drinking other wines." Frederick was embarrassed at so much attention.

"Yes," he replied, "*Bordeaux*."

"Why didn't you say so, at once," said Lamartine,



"I have some that came from the Marquis de La-grange: the most famous cellar of Médoc. John, go and fetch it."

Frederick's embarrassment increased.

"You are very good," said he. "I would not disturb you for any thing. I would much rather have this water. It is perfect."

"Do you suspect my Médoc?" said Lamartine, laughing.

Frederick was brave, however, and he continued, "I feel on uncertain ground, and frankness is the most beautiful virtue. For twenty years, I have drank only a particular kind of Bordeaux."

"Tell me what it is, and I will have it brought."

"I have it in my carriage," said Frederick, in his melodious voice.

He had brought his own wine!!!

We tried not to laugh.

This, then, was the reason of his refusal to sleep at Monceaux. He did not care to display his luxurious habits, and preferred to bring his two bottles of Bordeaux, every day, and rely upon bribing a servant to make the substitution without attracting attention.

The bottles were brought in.

"I have some soda-water too," said Frederick, pointing to his syphon.

We observed that the syphon had not changed its level, when the two bottles were emptied.

Order was once more restored.

The cause of melancholy removed, Frederick became genial though still a little stiff. The political man subdued him. Had Lamartine only written the "Meditations," Frederick would have "tutoyed" him at the first interview.

Lamartine was careful to confine his conversation to the theatre. Frederick talked thoughtfully and sensibly of his profession, and related a few anecdotes with a good deal of delicacy. The ladies did not find him the Frederick they dreamed of.

When we were leaving the table, Lamartine said to me,

"If I had known that it was to be so serious, I would have invited the clergy."

After the cigars, a conspiracy of the nieces was declared.

They wanted a scene from Robert Macaire.

"I have put on my most beautiful dress for it," said Mme. de P., "You cannot refuse us."

Lamartine had the good taste not to urge.

Frederick was inflexible. He had not come to appear in comedy. He was charged with the responsibility of Lamartine's *début* at Porte-Saint-Martin, and had come to give advice, and to study his parts. He could not pose as a harlequin. However, he compensated for his refusal by relating more anecdotes, in which, in spite of himself, the marvellous

artist appeared in every gesture and intonation. We passed the evening as if at the theatre, and Mme. de P., did not regret having put on her fine dress.

Lamartine gave us his manuscript, displaying as it did, on the large leaves of vellum, his beautiful penmanship.

"Cut it, add to it, and make it over," said he to us.

Boussin and I were a little overpowered at this confidence. It was imperative, and we were doing him a favor. Lamartine was one, who could do everything but correct his own work.

I took the first three acts, and Boussin, the last two. The next morning, Lamartine came to us with a very serious face. He read the famous suspected act.

"What do you say of it?" he asked.

"It is venturesome, and dangerous." I said.

The poet had had one of his most audacious inspirations, such as in "*La Chute d'un Ange*."

There were many beauties in it, though it was very evident where the scene was laid.

We resolved not to touch this formidable act, and so our work was accomplished, in a very few mornings. We finished, here and there, an incomplete verse, and added a few insignificant scenes, simply to give clearness, and precision. Boussin had to his account, thirty new lines, and I, sixty. They were

lost in the ocean of beautiful, and impassioned images. From beginning to end, it was a cry of liberty from the black race.

Lamartine declared that he was at the end of his inventive resource, and having explained the difficulty, he asked his three guests to give a little scene for the unhappy act. Michel Lèvy, and Mirès, with good taste, acknowledged their incompetency, and Frederick accepted the task. After three days of concentration, he announced that he was satisfied with what he had done.

The tribunal met again in Lamartine's cabinet, Michel Lévy, and Mirès taking part. They represented the bank, and wanted to be sure that the corrections had not compromised their thirty thousand francs.

Frederick draped himself in a large cloak, and read to us,—a lifeless, spiritless nothing.

The wonderful actor was a poet, only before the footlights. The scene would have been rejected as too soporific, even by M. Bouilly,

The silence of the tomb followed the recitation, Lamartine was in a tempest of rage, internally, and without delay, put himself boldly to work. Eight days later, the manuscript was complete, and we all separated.

The most modest, and the most interesting person of this group of counsellors, was Charles Lemaî-

tre, who betrayed his future vocation, by his observations as an intelligent listener. His father's excellent nature and persevering industry were spoiled by an exaggeration of manner, but as a tragedian, he was incomparable.

The preparations at Porte-Saint-Martin, dragged along till the following spring. Lamartine, whom the Assembly was absorbing for the last time, charged Paul Saint-Victor and me with the direction of the rehearsals. We were thrown into a theatrical world upon which Saint-Victor was afterward to shed such warm light by his criticisms, which were a course of history, poetry, and eloquence. At that time, however, he was inexperienced, and in the darkness and chill of that great hall, with only the uncertain, melancholy light of the half-hidden stage lamps, we sat in our stalls, and had not authority enough to control anyone.

Frederick supplied our deficiencies. He was an admirable manager and director.

Mlle. Clarissè Miroy aided Lia Félix, Rachel's sister, who was a young debutante of sixteen.

When the responses were imperfectly given, Frederick was magnificent in his anger, and tragic, in his apostrophes. His good nature soon returned, and his reprimands were visibly softened. He recited his own rôle in a low tone. Sometimes, he studied an effect, and he would startle us, as a lion that is trying his roars. Lamartine only came to the last rehearsals.

Desplace was there, one evening, with Mme. de Lamartine.

The poet, coming home late one night, said,

"I have just come from Porte-Saint-Martin, and I am exhausted and bored. There is not the least interest in the five acts. It will be a magnificent failure."

He changed his mind, the night before the representation. Frederick had been superb in the grand monologue of Toussaint. The cries of a whole enslaved race were in the agonies of his voice. The other actors were excellent, Michel Lévy wept.

Lamartine went into the green room, to congratulate the actors. Clarisse Miroy came to meet him.

"Do not refuse my reward," she exclaimed, "and let me say, that my lips have touched the brow of a god." and she kissed Lamartine.

The signal was given. Lamartine also kissed Lia.

We brought in our claims of associates, and made the tour of those charming faces.

The representation of this drama was the first literary festival since 1848. The Republican party had felt itself vanquished by the Reaction, but this night of 1850, it gathered "*en masse*" at Porte-Saint-Martin. The enthusiasts in art and poetry, who still held to Lamartine, came in throngs.

Some of the scenes were successful beyond expectation. The great Homeric lines stood out in

bold relief, and were applauded vociferously. There seemed to escape from them, a current of electricity, awakening the purest depths of the soul. The beauties alone passed through the net work of the drama.

Lamartine was greeted as the great Emancipator. We were certain from the first act, that the success would be political. Lamartine was too lyrical for a theatre. His stanzas required a temple.

The audience caught a glimpse of the poet behind the grating of the box, and after the curtain had fallen, cries of "Vive Lamartine" and "Vive la République," continued for half an hour, without cessation.

The President's guard crowded into the corridors, thinking that a new Provisionary Government was about to be proclaimed. At two o'clock in the morning, the Boulevards still resounded with these seditious cries. Lamartine did himself too much justice in his preface. "The drama has been forgotten. It is the great comedian, who has been applauded. He has surpassed himself, and I have been saved a fall, that I merited and accepted, in advance. All is well."

What Lamartine failed to say was, that the drama had *thirty* representations, and fully indemnified Michel Levy and Mirès.

The day after the first representation, I went to congratulate Frederick. There was something that I could not comprehend in his rendition, and I said



to him, " In the fifth act, when you are saying, that the tiger has devoured the bodies of the white and the black man. Why do you rest so long between the two lines ;

" Et rougeant leurs deux corps de la tête aux orteils,  
En leur ôtant la peau les avait faits pareils."

Frederick reddened and replied, " I will tell you, and it will be a good thing for comedians to know, and a warning against forming the compromising habit that I have. Between the fourth and fifth acts, I drank a bottle of Bordeaux, in order to sustain the weight of a play that was going to fail. I was actually asleep between those two lines. I even dreamed. I never experienced such horror, as in finding myself before the public when I awoke."

## XVII.

### *Saint-Point.*

WHILE Boussin and I were working upon the corrections, we had seen coming into the chateau, a tall young man, whose long light hair fell over his shoulders, like the masters of the sixteenth century.

"That is another new secretary. You shall know him."

"What is his name?"

"Charles Alexandre."

I thought for a moment.

"I know him already. I have read in the Brittany newspapers some very flattering sketches of myself, signed by him."

"He has written them because you belong to my circle. I am his Brahma and his Bible. There was no bond between us, still he has come two hundred leagues, simply for the pleasure of being here. He is rich, and gives himself to me as freely as the ocean gives its waves to the Brittany shore. So, I insist that our shore shall be hospitable to him."

The country has responded faithfully to Lamartine's request. It has given a charming wife to

Charles Alexandre, and sent him to the Assembly, as a representative of the people of Bordeaux.

Charles Alexandre soon took a prominent place in the household, and also in my affection. Mme. de Lamartine recognized from the first, the poetic nature and nobility of the Breton. He gained all hearts by his frankness. At first he was a little abrupt, for he never disguised a disapprobation. Profoundly spiritualistic, he knew how to make Mme. de Lamartine understand that the Catholic annotations, added by her trembling hand, spoiled the unity of Lamartine's ideas. She was a woman of such intelligence and good sense, that she thanked him for opposing her, and she found in him an earnest coöperator in her work. She was not even alarmed by those beautiful verses, inspired by free thought, written on the death of Lamannais. She felt that Alexandre had come into a crumbling house only to keep away the lizards, and prevent a stain upon its glory. He did not come to Lamartine in his power, but waited till the twilight of life was thickening, and brought to him the light of a strong republican faith, and a passionate devotion. However adverse his ideas were to hers, he continued to be the intimate friend of Mme. de Lamartine's declining years. There are no affections more lasting than those established by contradictions.

Mme. de Lamartine showed wonderful elasticity, and vigilance to the end of her days. She entered

democracy heart and soul, and never gave a counsel against Liberty. She had sacrificed her fortune to the political adventures of a great life, and rejoiced in the prospect of assuring a peace after her death, for she could not transfer anything. She was several years older than her husband, and felt that he would survive her.

She preserved her youthful habits not from coquetry of old age, but to keep sadness from her husband's eyes. Though a constant invalid after her voyages and griefs, she rose every morning at six o'clock, and gave her early hours to painting, and correcting proofs. She was always ready for the excursions, and kept up her exercise of horseback riding. At seventy years of age, she had black hair, and a slight and elegant figure. She was scrupulous in regard to her own toilette for dinner, but no longer exacted dress coats for the gentlemen. Too many honest jackets had been seated at her table, for her to resent a little negligence. She read everything, so as to keep Lamartine posted in all literary matters. She had the simplicity of good sense, which was apparent in the discussion of all questions not obscured by a religious fanaticism, but this was gradually diminishing. By her kind indulgence, she attracted even those whom her title of foreigner prejudiced against her. I do not believe that God has made many souls so steadfast.

She also had nieces, and cousins as charming, and

more foreign, than Lamartine's. They came from England and India, bringing with them the graces and perfumes of other countries. They came usually in the latter part of the Autumn, brightening the woods and vines, with their beautiful faces. They brought their own dreams to Saint-Point and Monceaux and left others behind.

Even if Monceaux had not had the attraction of M. and Mme. de Lamartine, it would have been enchanting by these visits, which always inspired a verse from Lamartine. Each new comer carried away a bouquet of rhymes.

I remember the mother of one, who united the Anglo-Indian type. She had founded a religious faith half Christian and half Indian. During twenty years of catechizing she had only made one convert. Notwithstanding this apparent discouragement, she placed herself as a priestess and tried to convert us. Her daughter did not share her mother's belief, or perhaps she would have succeeded better. I am quite sure that Mme. X., came with the intention of converting Lamartine. She succeeded only in making a friend. I do not know whether she is still living or whether at last, she has reached Eternal Truth, the secret of which she possessed.

Lamartine loved this searcher of souls, who endeavored to draw others only by gentleness and charity. He called her a "fanatic lamb."

Among the other autumnal guests at Monceaux was Charles Labor. A marriage of love had stranded this son of the Mediterranean at Cormatin. He is an artist, and gives to the admiring world a fresh picture at every exposition. His landscapes are as tender and expressive as his heart. Like Alexandre, he was a friend of later years.

It was impossible for Lamartine to give himself to a stranger. Before one had seen his face, the heart had received his verses. No one read his poems, but to know him, and Labor was one of those who knew him the best. He had painted a "Lake," and a "Valley" from the "Meditations." Great poets recruit scholars for music and painting. Lamartine has decided many events by the inspiration of his verse.

Labor had loved his wife from reading *Graziella*, and one of the chief considerations in his marriage, was to live near Lamartine.

I did not impose him upon Lamartine during the first visit, longer than a quarter of an hour. At the second interview, Lamartine invited him to come again, and could not do without him afterwards. Lamartine was as sensitive to the communion of souls, as the witch-hazel is to the spring. Labor has not lived here for the last fifteen years. He has transported with him the worship of Lamartine. He has made Republicans and Spiritualists in a south, teeming

with Royalists and Materialists. His expressive enthusiasm is contagious.

A part of himself is buried at Saint-Point;—Labor has had many conversations with Lamartine and his memory will control my souvenirs. I write, hoping to inspire others. We must make Lamartine live again. He will have his Evangelists.

A collection of his letters is announced. I have supplied some for the publication. They are more particularly notes, and though wonderful, do not express all. A private and sustained correspondence, was impossible to one who wrote to the whole world through his books. It is the historic duty of his friends, to tell all that they know of him.

Let us seek the other friends of these last years. Dumas fils, often came, though not until the declining days of that noble life. His bright mind re-illuminated the rays of a clouding sky. One could scarcely comprehend an intimacy between the author of "La Dame aux Camélias," and "Le Demi-Monde," and the singer of Elvira, as he has been called, if one did not remember that Dumas fils is one of the best models of the French tongue. Conscious of belonging to that class which refines and concentrates a language, he desired to approach one who had immortalized it. He did not come to Monceaux to seek types and horizons for a scene or romance, about which it might be said that he opened the door of



Beaumarchais and Balzac, if he were not a whole school in himself. He came because he had always admired Lamartine, and whom he admired, he loved.

One time, when he was at Monceaux, there was an insatiable curiosity in the neighborhood, to see him. Conversations were so manœuvred, that Lamartine was forced to send out invitations for a grand dinner.

Dumas fils was to be exhibited.

It was an insolence to think of coming to Monceaux to see any other than Lamartine, and Dumas understood this. It was like a first exhibition, where the boxes are free, and according to the chronicles of all who were present, Dumas showed only a blonde moustache over a silent or satirical mouth. He said nothing during the evening, yet on any occasion, he could send out his words with as brilliant effect, as Ruggieri sends off his sky-rockets. He had the courage to appear insignificant, and saved his floods of conversation for Lamartine alone, with whom he talked in a low tone in one corner of the room.

The neighbors were indignant and vowed that they would never buy another of Dumas père's books, nor would they ever go to the "Gymnase."

Lamartine came to my room, after the guests had departed. "Dumas never showed so much spirit," said he, "He has taught me a lesson, and has complimented me, at the same time, by his silence. If ever I am Minister of Foreign Affairs, again, I shall

send him to London. He is a diplomate of talent." "First of all, nominate him to the Academy." I retorted. "After his father dies. I hope not to survive a man, who has amused me so much."

Nadaud always made Lamartine very happy. Every year, he spent a month with Boussin, and they were always on the road towards Lamartine's, who delighted in the sensibility and refinement of Nadaud's frank and, affectionate nature. He talked just as he wrote, always in tune. One could see by the lightness of his first efforts, that he had been a friend of Musset. He was afterwards associated with Laurent Pichat, and the measures of his rhymes are full and complete, when he suspects that Pichat is near enough to hear them. Nadaud has had a successful career for thirty years, in which time he has never succeeded in making an enemy.

Lamartine sympathized with the tone of melancholy, tinging even the most joyous refrains of this inexhaustible song writer. He applauded in these fancies, the trumpet-like tones of honesty and reason, that sound through the couplets of Nadaud, but what *attracted* him the most, was the inimitable artist who was revealed whenever there was a piano. Lamartine liked those who diverted him from his cares. If he caused tears to flow, he could clap his hands with delight, to any one who gave him a ray of joy. The "Gendarmes" would do him good for a fortnight,

and he never was weary of it. Thus Nadaud found his success at Monceaux, as everywhere else. He was as popular as joy, and good as happiness. He must be gratified, to have been the source of so much pleasure to a ship-wrecked Hercules.

One day, after one of those evenings, when Lamartine had laughed like a common mortal he led me into his study.

"I am going to have the horses saddled," said he "and we will go into the woods of Cluny. The fog is an excellent mantle for a horseback ride. Before they are ready, I shall have time to read you the first pages of Raphaël."

"What is Raphaël?" I asked.

"Raphaël is myself. The book will also be called, 'Pages de la Vingtième Année.' It will be the beginning of my 'Memoires,' I work at it at my leisure."

He had never spoken to me of this.

The book was ripening in the shade like winter fruit in the dark.

The study at Monceaux had not the arched roof of Saint-Point, which was like a sanctuary for the winged inspirations that came before the setting of the stars. It looked out upon a sombre square of old chestnuts, the only garden of the Château. A wooden staircase led to the court, encumbered with casks and fermenting wine-tubs. The dogs filled up the room, and tore into rags with their long claws the Persian

covering of the little divan. The vintagers, leaving their sabots outside the door, as the faithful leave their slippers at the entrance of the Mosque, were always coming and going. There was a large case, on which were scattered cigars and snuff. The snuff-box was the only inconsistent contrast to Lamartine's elegant habits. A fire of vine-fagots and branches, burned in the chimney. A large table of varnished wood was heaped up with enormous pages of manuscript. Whole quires of paper emerged, here and there, from the ocean of newspapers and pamphlets. In all this chaos, there was order only to Lamartine.

He was not dressed for his ride. He had on his old ink-stained jacket. Unrolling the manuscript, he said, "Do not be afraid, we will only read ten pages. I only want to get an impression of the beginning, and we must not keep the horses waiting. Light a cigar. My dreams will pass away in smoke."

Then leaning back in his chair, and stretching out his feet to the mantel-piece, he commenced.

I will not repeat "Raphaël," for almost every one knows it. Those who do not, I will ask if they have ever accidentally found in a book a few flowers, picked by a river's bank during some voyage of long ago? Did not the sight of them bring back the whole scene, the sun, the landscape, even the wind that bent them? Lamartine had seemed to put into these pages all the flowers of his youth, culled on the shores

of the passions which had traversed his life. I felt no longer in the presence of an old man, bowed by the storms of life. I saw the young man Raphaël drinking in ecstasy and love from every source. I saw Graziella and Elvira, winding their brown tresses around his white brow.

The tenth page had been finished long ago, when the servant rapped at the door saying,

"The horses are impatient. We cannot hold Saphyr any longer."

"Walk them about," replied Lamartine, without consulting me.

He shared my intoxication.

The reading was resumed, and did not cease till lamp-light. He recommenced the next morning, and read to the last line. I was suspicious of the entire truth of his confidence. I could not feel that love had remained so pure, with such charming mistresses. I set a trap.

"The purity of your book will make it immortal. You have known only the marriage of souls. All these beautiful women pass before your eyes like so many visions. You have not degraded them by giving them senses."

I shall never forget his expression. This kind of praise did not suit him. The man did not claim to be more than human.

"I am not sure of that," said he, "perhaps, I have

shown too much respect for the modesty of my readers. I shall not succeed in founding a Platonic school, and I don't intend to. It is a horribly false system. The sexes make a part of the mysteries of creation. Faublas' character is truer than Raphaël's. But Raphaël was a pupil of the Jesuits, of Belley, who taught him their reticence. At all events, I hope that the public will divine the truth, and that these partially-concealed allusions, will not dishonor me. I have purified the flames through which we have passed, but they have burned us to the marrow. I have not embraced an empty vision, as the saints of the Thébaidé did. Man has his nervous, as well as his physical system. I am not like Grandisson. I accept the dualism. The senses have their raptures, and this is a part of my poesy. I beg of you, rectify my half-tints. However, I will do it myself in my "Memoires." I never have taken the vow of chastity. I have loved all whom I have adored." He was noble and astonishing in his justification. He defended himself from virtue. He walked up and down the cabinet, almost irritated at my comments. I had an object in continuing them. He had had the weakness to spoil the last line of his inimitable "Lac."

Instead of "Tout dise: ils ont aimé," he had written for a family edition,

"Tout dise: ils ont passé," which inspired a "bon-mot" from Mme. de Girardin, who proposed:



"Tout dise : ils ont fumé !" I made him almost ashamed of his concession, and begged him to take the first text.

"Why so?" said he, "Mme. de Lamartine has reviewed the proofs, and says that I shall sell fifty more copies in England. My debts have made me do many cowardly things. Now, let us mount. The poor horses have been tired out these two hours!"

He had forgotten that he had commenced the reading the day before. Time had passed with the same rapidity as in his youth, in which he had plunged anew.

"Do not speak of our discussion during my lifetime," said he. "I must remain angelic for the sake of my nieces. Alas! a poor seraph in a grey-beard," said he, looking into the mirror.

In the evening, exhausted by his long reading, he slept by the fireside.

I shall always remember those radiant days. They had done him as much good as they did me. He had taken his staff again, and walked with the firm step of twenty. Young girls with their black eyes had again thrown their glamors over him. Memory had restored to him a departed world.

He felt that these enchantments were vibrating in my heart, and when he took his candle to go to bed, he said to me confidently. "Ah! Lacretelle, we have said beautiful things to day!"



## XVIII.

1849 *to* 1851.

FROM 1849 to 1851, were sad years at Monceaux, as they were all over France. Ingratitude had paid its debt to Lamartine. He was not re-elected in his department. A chance nomination sent him to the Legislature. He no longer occupied his high position. He believed, too soon, that his political rôle was finished, and he desired to bury himself with the Republic. The Republic was undermined, as it is to-day, by monarchic parties in parliament, which were playing the game of Bonaparte. The extreme left was less tranquil than now. And between these two mountains of intrigue, and ambition, Lamartine could not maintain an equilibrium. He became the scape-goat upon which the Israelitish Royalists piled all their hatreds, and he was deeply sensible of the universal ill-will. He thought that his voice would be lost in their clamors, so little by little, he withdrew. This was his fatal step, for he was still in full possession of his genius. It was not for the solitude and privacy of his home, that he prepared those wonderful speeches, which the questions raised by events, inspired in him.

How many words flowed over the trees at Saint-Point or through the gallery of Monceaux and were lost, that would have called the people to action, and the living, self-contained, methodized Republic, such as was inspired in the breast of that orator, would not have been stifled in an ill-omened night, but would have been proclaimed in the streets of Paris even after the hideous crime of December second.

He begged and implored, in vain, during those unhappy times. Lamartine was heart sick from discouragement, and respected himself too much to enter into a contest. He thought that his retirement was the means for making his work endure, and reserved himself for a new dawn. He dreamed that the nation, in looking for its leader, would see him in his voluntary exile. He waited for a return of justice, which never comes. He allowed himself to be calumniated, and his silence was taken for anger.

Nevertheless the hero in him protested. He rose every morning, bathed in sweats of indignation, and resplendent in mind, and it was then, that he wrote those marvellous articles for the "*Conseilleur du Peuple*," and that grand book, almost forgotten now, "*Le Passé, le Présent, et l'Avenir de la République*." The whole prophet was there. The book did not contain printed pages alone, there were illuminations,

The "*Conseilleur du Peuple*" gave Lamartine an illusion of a new fortune, but the fortune as I have

already said, went less to him, than to his editors, Mirès and Millaud. The publication rendered him a good service, indirectly. It kept him from dying of weariness, and his writings supplied the excitement of the tribune.

I do not know why he substituted the "Civilisateur," for the "Conseilleur." It was, doubtless, from the need of lessening his interest in the present, by means of history. He wrote a few biographies. I know nothing better than his "Cæsar," his innumerable "Ciceros," in whose life he traced his own analogy, and also his "Washington," whom he resembled in almost every point except in the duration of his Republic.

The "Civilisateur," lived some years, and was forgotten for the personal speculation of the "Cours de Littérature," which also helped him not to die.

Lamartine spent very little time at Paris during these years. Age had not yet touched him heavily, but his contemporaries were disappearing, one after another. He had no longer around him the same throng of admirers.

Political malice was carried so far, as to deny his value and reputation as a poet. The aristocracy could not pardon a nobleman, in whom the Republic was symbolized. They looked upon him as a deserter, for having passed over to the side of fraternity and wisdom. They contested his native refinement,

because he mingled with the people. The sacristans excommunicated him, because he had fought for the separation of the Church and State.

Veillot forgot that he had sat for two months at the table at Monceaux, and sent almost as many insults to Lamartine, as he did to Hugo. The fortunes saved by Lamartine, in the Revolution of February, refused the contribution of a penny towards his subscription, and consoled their avarice, by reading the epigrams of the "*Figaro*."

These moral wounds had a physical counter-irritant. Lamartine was often sick in those days. He had always been subject to articular rheumatism, and in his youth, had visited all the baths of France and Savoy, and now that the attacks became more frequent, he was often confined to his bed for weeks.

I must confess, that while his sufferings grieved us, these fits of sickness gave us occasional days of great rejoicing. A mussulman could not have accepted pain with more docility. He never rebelled except by soldierly expressions, and became at once, gentle, and courteous. We thoroughly enjoyed him during these imposed retreats. He would often ask us to read to him, and we knew what this meant. A line awakened a remembrance; an opinion led to a discussion. He talked inexhaustibly, gesticulating with his poor swelled hand. He was patient with the dogs, that crouched under his coverlid, and was

more indulgent to others in proportion to his own sufferings.

When the swelling in his hand had diminished, he would take his pen again. It was during one of these intervals, that he wrote the work on the Republic to which I have just alluded. He had just passed through one of these attacks at the end of November, 1851. I was there, at Monceaux, with Charles Alexandre. Every day brought us dismal news. That violation of the law, that bloody cloud, the Coup d'Etat, floated in the air. Would it come from the majority of the assembly, directed by Changarnier? Would it end in the incarceration of His Highness the President, and to a Restoration, more or less odious? Or, would it be declared by Bonaparte himself, who alone of all France, had raised his hand to heaven, swearing in God's name, that he would defend the Republic?

Lamartine saw that it could only come from the Palais de l'Elysée and from his sick bed, he sent to La Guerronière, editor-in-chief of his newspaper, the "Bien Public" of Paris, article upon article, to warn the public of the "attentât," and reveal the horror contained therein. None of these articles appeared. We could not believe that there was any complicity. La Guerronière's first impulse, on the second of December, was of indignation. He sent the resignation of his brother, who was nominated sub-prefect. Léon

Bruys who had been nominated to the same place, by his friend M. de Thorigny, had the same pricking of conscience, and although ruined, accepted nothing. The "Attentât" awoke us one morning, with the cruelty of a gaoler, who enters the prisoner's cell, and tell him that the scaffold is ready and he is to be executed.

The condemned were the Republic, and Lamartine who had proclaimed it. His rheumatism disappeared.

The fever of indignation cured the physical fever. We were in the gallery with the frightened people who had come from Mâcon, bringing new details of the murder. The Assembly was dissolved, the representatives imprisoned, a Plebiscitum announced, and the electors sent to the polls at the point of the bayonet.

No one will ever see such an explosion as that of Lamartine's. To be cheated by an idiot! To live again under an Emperor! To feel that the work of '89, the ardent pulsation of all the thought of a century, all the philosophy, all the blood of martyrs, had been thrown into an Imperial gutter! to be sent back into the darkness of night, after having thrown with full hands, the brightest lights upon one's country and history!

"This man is beyond the pale of humanity," he exclaimed. He is one of those wild beasts, escaped



from the jungles, like Tiberius, Nero or Caracalla. They do not tell us yet of massacres, but I tell you, that he who goes through the boulevards of Paris, has blood to his waist, and women and children have been killed by thousands. Our race is cursed. After seasons of peace, the descendants of Cain bequeath their crimes in the dark. Whatever may be the appearance of social virtue, there is always, somewhere, a woman betrayed by a Cæsar! Their offspring will reign in rottenness. He will open his brothels, and and sacristans will send their incense to him. You are going to see the Dictatorship of a beadle! He will declare insensate wars, so as to throw flags over the bed of a dead Liberty. And he will live long, and have many faces, and he will lead you to invasion! And if France does not oppose him by a rampart of Republicans, he will end in being an Emperor of demagogues! Ah! poor generations, doomed to simonies and servitude!"

He walked up and down the gallery striking the furniture in his impatience, moving even inanimate things with the wind of his prophetic words, and stirring our trembling souls.

"The country will rise from its sick bed as you have," we said. "It will deal out justice to this would-be-savior, before he has had time to gain his crown."

"Do not believe that! Cowardice is the in-



separable companion of ingratitude. The country has shown its ingratitude to me. It is ready to accept anything. In the departments where the name of Bonaparte still intoxicates, companies of Prætorians are now making ready. In the middle classes, energized by the Orleanists, there are Trymalcions, ready to open their banquet halls. Oh! this miscreant! And he will not insult me by *not* proscribing me, and if I open my lips, he will send an assassin."

Lamartine surpassed himself in his excitement. We were face to face with an event so monstrous, that nothing after it seemed impossible.

"None of us will leave you," said I to him. "You know that they will have to go through many hearts, before reaching yours. Our place is here."

"Your strict duty, the duty of all of you, is to go home," said he angrily. "An insurrection is not to be thought of against an army exhilarated by the smoke of Austerlitz. However, ridiculous as the vote must be, you are still the Republic's missionaries. Go!"

• I obeyed, and the cry of my conscience was an echo of that heart-rending appeal. I was not certain that there was not a tragedy in preparation for Lamartine, and had no assurance that I should ever see him again. I could not tell to what links in the chain this crime of December would attach. The heads of Republicans were not safe upon their shoulders. France was shrouded in fatality. I felt that

I was descending a valley enclosed by volcanoes, yet I counted little upon the duration of their eruption.

Three hours later, I was at Cormatin.

I am not writing my autobiography, but I cannot leave in the shade, one of the thousand events marking this sad period, and one of the falsehoods that unhappily enveloped my modest and inconspicuous life. All that I loved in the world, were at Mâcon and Cormatin. At Mâcon, were my aged parents and my brother. At Cormatin, my wife and only child.

About six o'clock in the evening, December fourth, a worthy man of my neighborhood opened my door mysteriously, saying, "I have just come from a fair. The men of Saint-Gengoux are arming and will march upon Mâcon to-morrow. There are five hundred of them. They are coming here to get you to lead them. My advice is, to mount your horse before midnight and conceal yourself in the woods of Boursier, so that they shall not find you. What I tell you is as true as the Gospel."

I pressed his hand. I knew that there were many patriotic men watching events, in the courageous little town of Saint-Gengoux-le-Royal.

"I have a few words to say to them," I replied, "and it is not my habit to fly from a danger that is behind me. Thank you, but I will stay and sleep here to-night."

He insisted.

“Your life is in danger. Think of Master Gaston.”

Gaston was the son I had, and now have no more. The good man was loth to leave me. I learned, afterwards, that he stayed all night at the gateway, listening.

In spite of what I said, I did not sleep.

Where was the *Right*?

Incontestably with those, who rose to defend the Constitution. But Lamartine's words were always before me. He did not approve of taking arms. That would only be a lost point to France, ready everywhere to kneel from fear. Since the law of May thirty first, the assembly had been frightfully unpopular. An isolated combat would only decimate an improvised army, and render more atrocious the assault against the Republicans. An army, ready to rise simultaneously, all over France, must be prepared. Even when it is just, civil war is a lamentable extremity. Mâcon was to be the theatre of its outbreak. This probability made me shudder. Then, I seemed to hear the peaceful respirations of my sleeping wife and child; should I make them quick and troubled, by rushing headlong into the unknown? Had the hour really come for such a sacrifice? I did not sleep until morning. The tocsin, sounding from the market, awakened me. Hurried steps were heard in the streets. Cries came from the village doors.

It was the death-knell of the country, and the first funeral signal of the insurrectionary march of Caesar.

Fresh reports were constantly coming to the chateau. The band of Gengoux, as they called these soldiers of Liberty, had just arrived. The *brigands* were carrying away the fire-arms from the houses, and had even forced the strong-box of the assessor.

The people could not comprehend, and permitted it. The men were gathering wood, in the forest, and the women were at the river, washing. Drums were beating, dismally, in the street; guns were exploding in inexperienced hands, and all this for a legitimate demand, but under deceptive appearances.

My neighbor had not deceived me. I saw twelve armed men coming down the avenue of acacias, and crossing the bridge over the canal. I hurriedly embraced the dear ones, who surrounded me crying for fear that they were going to take me away. Then taking my gardener and servant as witnesses, I went to the foot of the great staircase, to wait for them. The neighbors half crazy with fear, were crowding into the kitchen door. I recognized several well-known faces in the advancing column. At its head, was citizen D.—who had given many proofs of devotion to liberty, during his life.

He was the speaker.

He demonstrated in a very few words, that the riot was with the violators of the Constitution ; that the National Guards of Saint-Gengoux were going to re-establish republican authority in the chief places, and they demanded in the name of a common faith, that I should put myself into their ranks.

I replied that the question of *right* had not been asked, that we must try and save the Republic by some other means than a generous imprudence, that the ballot box would soon be open, and corrupt as it might be, we must, before all, try this pacific measure, and that for my part, I was resolved to await events, and in all probability, proscription. Citizen D., by not insisting, proved that he was of my opinion, at heart. He said, that he must proceed to make requisitions. I asked him for a written statement. I could give nothing to the war, since I had refused my person.

D. consented. He demanded a horse, to send an orderly to Cluny, and took an old carbine brought from Spain, and a few charges of powder that I had for my pistols. This was all. Twenty men were witnesses.

D. was going away with his National Guard. I called him back.

"An isolated movement is always a foolish one," said I to him, in a low tone. "France is in a dormant state, and will not protest. We know it."

"I know it, too, but there are among us, those who urge, and press. You will do better to wait, I am not free."

He pressed my hand sadly, called together his cohort composed of two hundred men, and they left for Cluny, singing the Marseillaise.

Five hours after, my horse was brought back to me. There was almost a panic, the next day at Mâcon. Stupid reports were in circulation, that the peasants of Lugny and Azé were coming with bags to pillage the houses. A battalion of engineers, was sent out on the road to meet them. The insurgents had recruited at Cluny and Saint-Sorlin, to the number of five hundred. They were poorly armed, and had no ammunition. The meeting took place four miles from Mâcon, just before reaching the park belonging to M. de Rambateau. There was only one feeble discharge of musketry.

Not an engineer was touched.

The commandant saw that he was dealing with inexperienced rebels, and showed them that they did not aim with precision. Three men fell, and the others dispersed. A few arrived in great disorder at Nancelle, where Champvans kindly received them.

This was the only resistance to the Coup d'Etat in the Mâconnais.

Lamartine had judged his country well.

Three days after all the newspapers of Paris were



sold to the Empire. Those allowed to appear, announced, that a rich proprietor, between Saint-Gengoux and Cluny, had aided and abetted the insurrection, by giving three thousand francs to the chief. Afterwards, books, paid for by the police, openly named me, and with the vivid imagination of Vidocq charged still more to my account.

I wrote to all of the Parisian papers, denying the charge, and stating, that the men had taken nothing except by requisition, and that private property had, in every instance, been respected. So universal had been the subjugation, that not a single paper had the courage to publish my vindication, and the justification of my compatriots.

They were more noble at Mâcon. A legitimist paper, "*La Bourgogne*," though inimical to my opinions, exposed itself to proscription, by daring to say what I wanted, in three lines.

The proscription was going on very well with us. A Napoleonic proconsul had just arrived. He died two months ago, Chamberlain of the Emperor of Russia, bearing the title of Baron de Romand. M. de Romand deigned to think of me.

He proceeded with a perfidy, which showed in advance his aptitude for Muscovite favors.

The Saint-Gengoux expedition was a good excuse for making many arrests.

The Prefecture investigated opinions, not acts. I



was summoned to appear before the Judge of Instruction, as witness.

This was a beginning. The deposition might be turned into an accusation. My friends were convinced that I never would return to Mâcon. I went to Monceaux, the evening before, to tell Lamartine of the citation. Public agitations absorbed personal incidents, and he did not pay much attention to what I said. However, the next morning, I was called into his cabinet.

"Every word spoken to day, has the power of sending you to Cayenne," said he. "What will be your attitude, before the Judge of Instruction?"

"I remember every thing distinctly," said I, "and I shall clear these generous fellows from every imputation."

"But the question is also with yourself. M. de Romand is seeking for some means to implicate me in the uprising, and it is very natural. I rendered him some service, at the time I thought that he was writing for freedom. To reach me through my friends, would be a good recommendation for him, to his government. Be convinced that it is I, who will appear in your guise. Give me your deposition. Do not change any thing. Let us weigh the terms, together."

I told him all that I could remember. He listened with his head in his hands.

"There is enough to transport you," said he.

"Bonaparte's men will not understand, that you have not happened to be killed to save your percussion caps, and the second of December. M. X., the judge, is a worthy compatriot. He will not listen to the Palais de l'Elysée, while he is writing your testimony, Promise me, that you will come back to dinner, this evening. Give me up."

Lamartine was visibly anxious, and I was also, but only on his account.

"What will you do?" said I to him. "Bonaparte will not dare to touch you, but you cannot breathe the air of the Empire."

"I shall settle in the East. I will build a house near mine, for your family. I have drawn you into the tempest, and it shall be my duty and pleasure to conduct you safely into port. I would set out tomorrow, if my affairs had not put the inquisitorial collar around my neck. A political man ought not to make debts. I have been very foolish. My historical dignity will be lowered by my actual nakedness, but I will work hard enough to free myself. I will go and temper the swords of France in the waters of the Styx. My country is delivered up to Mandrin. Come back soon."

He was sending me away.

"If you are arrested, I will plead for you," added he, at the door. "I will make your condemnation glorious."

He was not deceived in regard to M. X.,

The judge, evidently, betrayed the mission he had received. He dictated my testimony to his secretary, and softened the ambiguities which might have compromised me. I was glad enough to weaken the charges that weighed upon citizen D., and those who followed or were led, by him.

There was no possibility of drawing a bolt upon me. M. de Romand foamed with rage. He publicly announced that my *participation* in the revolt, could not remain unpunished.

For a fortnight he talked of Algeria. Afterwards, the protests were so vehement that he limited himself to saying, that he should send me a passport.

I went to Paris.

A friend made the journey, expressly, to warn me that the decision was irrevocable, and that I had only to anticipate it, by choosing my place of exile.

I preferred to wait until my arbiter was more explicit. I had not the pleasure of being seriously pursued. Mme. de Romand, a woman of influence, and of great intelligence, had met my mother, and been much attracted by the serenity of my father. Doubtless, she did not desire to see a tragedy in the family. The charge remained, but the passport was destroyed.

## XIX.

### *A Period of Relaxation.*

I WILL not close my book, upon which I must soon put the seal of the tomb, without showing Lamartine in those merry happy times he often gave himself.

In 1854 we were at Saint-Point. One morning he mounted the winding stairs leading to my room, and said.

“I must go to Monceaux to-day, to taste the wines. Will you go with me, and give me your opinion?”

He did his duty, conscientiously, as “propriétaire.” He entered the press with his little silver cup, tasted, made a grimace of approbation, and then gave his opinion as connoisseur.

The truth was, that he knew little or nothing about it, and I, much less.

I said to him ;

“I shall be a poor judge. You had better take Rolland.”

“Rolland’s taste is spoiled by his wines of Thorins. You can give me an unbiassed opinion. How did you come yesterday?”

“On horseback.”

“Will your horse harness well?”

“Not at all. He kicks.”

“That is nothing. We will harness him with Saphyr. You know, he is the only horse that I have now. We will go by Tramayes, and I will show you the Bois des Sanves, those melancholy groves of my youth, where the spirit of poesy used to come to me. You will find some for your use, but I will not answer for the quality. We will stop at Bussière, to see Mlle. Bruys, who will send us on to Monceaux. It will be a charming ride in the fog.”

He worshipped the fog, as I have said. It may have been because some people had compared him to Baour-Lormian, the translator of Ossian.

We breakfasted at once.

York was not very rebellious, and accommodated himself easily to his chance companion.

The route by Tramayes was hilly, and the horses were obliged to walk. To save time, Lamartine gave up showing me the Bois de Sanves, which I had already seen more beautiful than in nature, in his harmonious description.

We reached Bussière without incident. I was anxious to know how we were to get to Monceaux; Mlle. Bruys had only one old horse, and an old-fashioned round carriage, dating back to the beginning of the eighteenth century, that always at-

tracted a curious crowd whenever it appeared in the streets of Mâcon.

Bussi re had been one of Lamartine's visiting places, in his youth. Mlle. Bruys, stiff, and straight, was travelling gently towards her ninetieth year. The house was very correct and proper, like its owner. There were two outside stair-cases, narrow, and steep ; one descending into a little court, where no carriage could enter, and the other, into a little garden, so contracted that seven or eight cassocks entirely filled it, when Mlle. Couronne, in extreme indulgence, permitted the cur s to hold a conference there. I have never known a house so perfumed with quinces and sweetmeats. The table was always spread and a numerous family filled the house. It was a hotel, carried on by the strictest economies. Mlle. Bruys was the sole survivor of a large circle of brothers, and sisters. One of the brothers, M. Bruys de Vaudran, as a neighbor had the honor of teaching the future author of the "Meditations," to write. We were distantly related, and I came to Bussi re like the other cousins. Mlle. Couronne was not rich, though the inheritor of all the successions, and her hospitality resulted from her rigid order. Everything was methodical with her, from the arrangement of her blonde hair, to the ordering of a repast, or the regulating of a conversation. She permitted very little approach to levity, but we

were told, that it had wandered around her, in her youth.

There was a curé at Bussière, a veritable curé of a precious type, having a loud voice, and his hand always extended towards a bottle of wine. He was the manager of Mlle.'s money matters, and though knowing how to make a capital out of the revenue entrusted to him, he was, nevertheless, serviceable, charitable, and always ready to take the initiative. He had confessed to my father his long hesitation between the profession of commercial traveller and the apostolate, and had chosen the altar as providing a certainty.

Bruys d'Ouilly was the presumptive heir to the house, but he was already ruined when the will was made, and the curé persuaded the aunt that she would be insane to leave her fortune to one who did not know how to take care of his own, for an eater should not have his bread assured. In spite of the curé, Mlle. heroically left Léon Bruys two hundred francs a year, as long as he lived.

Lamartine did not suspect the tricks of the apostolic staff, and preserved a traditional respect for the last survivor of an honorable family.

Mlle. Couronne received us in a parlor where there was no fire, though the weather was cold. The curé was there. Lamartine declared his intention at once of asking for a relay to Monceaux. He was expect-



ing company to dine at Saint-Point, and his horses must be saved for a quick return. Mlle. Couronne was disturbed. She knew how ridiculous her carriage was for him, and tried to excuse herself; at the same she worshipped Lamartine, even if she had not quite forgiven him for the Republic, and did not like to refuse a favor.

"I have a horse and cabriolet, M. Alphonse," said the curé, "I am also something of a driver, and can show you the country as well as one of Lafitte's and Gaillard's conductors."

Lamartine had no desire to be indebted to him, and was secretly amused at the embarrassment of Mlle. Couronne, who did not dare to confess her equipage.

"I have a great desire to go in Mlle. Bruys' coupé," said he, "My uncle has often praised its springs."

This promotion to the dignity of a coupé touched Mlle. Bruys.

"My gardener has gone to the Fair at Pierreclos, to-day, and I have no one to harness," said she.

"I will do it," said the curé, impetuously.

"You have a funeral to attend to, M. le Curé," said Lamartine. "The bell was ringing, as we came by."

"That is true," said the curé, opening a little closet, and drinking a glass of cordial, before going away.

Affairs were growing complicated, and Lamartine, anticipating a gay recital to make to his nieces, in the evening, was visibly delighted.

Toinette was there.

Toinette was the only servant of the house, who prepared dinner for a dozen people, and arranged all the rooms.

She remembered when he used to come with his friend Ducret de l'Ange, only a young man of eighteen, and she loved him passionately.

She had suspected an episode, and was indiscreetly listening at the half-open door.

"Bijou shall be in the shafts in less than fifteen minutes," said she. "I sometimes take Mlle. to Saint-Sorlin."

Toinette on the box!

This perspective redoubled Lamartine's delight. But she was disagreeable to me, and we were likely to meet some of the country gentlemen, who would make remarks.

I gave a straight blow to Lamartine's hopes.

"Your coachman will drive you," said I.

Lamartine was thoroughly disposed to laugh that day. A change of object, gave him another opportunity for exercising his love for the ridiculous. The coachman had had his day of fine turn-outs and prancing steeds. Would he consent to mount the antediluvian box? Lamartine gave his arm to

Mlle. Couronne, and we descended to the stable-yard.

Toinette had harnessed Bijou, and was holding him outside. The coupé had been drawn out. It seemed to me more amusing than ever. It was absolutely a fossil. The sun and rain had left their traces. It had all the colors of a mouldy palette. Mlle. Couronne looked at it with shame and tenderness.

"It was thirty years old, when I made my first communion," said she. "The grandparents and all the aunts younger than I am now, have ridden in it. I am sorry not to be able to offer you a more suitable carriage, M. Alphonse, but I see at the door so many faces, that I weep in looking at it."

This poetical tenderness was lost on the coachman. He would only drive the berlin, or take his dismissal. He was attached to Lamartine, and deigned to help Toinette harness, but that was all. The great Bijou filled the traces well. He looked like a miller's horse, and there was not much prospect of reaching Monceaux before night.

"Hurry, and get over the road through the vines, so that no one may see you," said Mlle. Couronne.

Lamartine sent back a hasty benediction, and seated himself on one of the cushions. I retreated, as far as possible, into one corner, so that he should have full liberty of movement, for the space was

contracted. I gazed upon that great historical head in its incongruous frame.

"It was a capital idea of yours to borrow Mlle. de Bruys' horse," said he. "My history would have been lacking, without this journey."

So it was *I* who had had the idea!

The road through the vines, was full of people that day. We met the splendid equipage of a neighbor, who had come out boldly with four horses, showing his fortunate speculations at the Bourse. The carriage occupied the whole road. It was full of gay young ladies, laughing merrily. The proprietor, dressed in a kind of livery, was driving. He stopped.

"The devil! Here is Mlle. Bruys' wheelbarrow!" he cried. It will frighten my horses and they will break their legs against the rocks."

He tried to turn to one side, but his horses were frightened, and with one spring, reared.

Bijou was imperturbable and continued his little trot, and following a straight line, he passed between the carriage and ravine.

I hoped that Lamartine would conceal himself behind the panel, but he was determined to produce an effect.

He lowered the glass and saluted. The laughs ceased. The volatile heads inclined.

One of the ladies told me, afterwards, that she

did not believe him so ruined. During that week, she subscribed to the "*Cours de Littérature.*" Lamartine sent the money to Mlle. Couronne, to distribute among her poor.

He was very much amused at the encounter, at first, but soon relapsed into silence and memories. The road to Milly always brought to him, its phantoms.

"Why should I not tell you what is absorbing me?" said he. Between these walnut trees and vine-stakes, I have had more heart-beats, than any where else. Remember what I tell you, and put it into one of your romances, and if it causes one half as many tears, as it has cost me, you will have had a success."

"Do not try to remember an event that grieves you," said I.

"Bah! the sorrows of early days are the music that stirs the soul. I was a lover in those days, and I see her now a dear little girl of seventeen. I was a few months older than she. It was Mlle. P., of whom I shall speak in my "*Mémoires.*" I had not a thought beyond the pink and white between her black curls. Whenever I pressed her hand, in the crowd coming from church, my heart beat all the afternoon on the quay. I had decided, irrevocably, to marry her, and triumph over the difficulties made by my family. My mother closed her eyes and lis-

tened to my heart. My father allowed himself to be softened by her. But there was my uncle, M. de Lamartine, whose very name had been the terror of my life. I had confessed nothing, but they knew all. There was a barrier between two souls, seeking each other. I was indignant that a social question should arise against nature, and that one found in me a conventional superiority over that incomparable creature. M. de Lamartine was an autocrat, like the only rich member of a family, and the keeper of its hopes. Everbody knelt obediently to him, and educated me in the same sentiment of slavery. I have always told you that theoretically Voltairian as he was, he preserved an invincible prejudice of caste. Mlle. P. belonged to the bourgeoisie, and her charms were unworthy of a needy nobleman. I had re-read "*Le Contrat social*," one morning, and was indulging in a fond hope. M. de Lamartine had offered himself for some election, I do not remember what. M. P., could command fifty votes, and though he held himself in a dignified and anticipative attitude, he did not disdain my alliance, and would make no opposition to my uncle, if my uncle was reasonable. I took my gun, and started off to the mountains to hunt for verses, rather than rabbits. The terrible uncle had honored Milly with a visit. He had criticized every thing on the table, found fault with my sisters' unbecoming toilettes, and finally, without taking a gun,

had followed me, evidently fully decided to tell me the whole truth, face to face. I had girded my loins with resolution, and had sworn that I would remain impregnable, for I had already made my plans, in the firm belief that I had a vocation for diplomacy. Nevertheless, as we mounted into the solitude of the vines, I began to falter. My uncle followed me through the stakes, without opening his lips, and I would not break a silence that was to reveal so much. To gain courage, I aimed at a little bird, that was picking at the grapes. I did not look, for I had a horror of assassination. The bird flew away, melodiously singing a song of gratitude.

"If that is the way you attain all that you aim at, you will not catch a great deal," said M. de Lamartine.

I entered at once into the full persuasion that I was going to make a bold stroke by a strategem; "I do not miss my aim every day," I replied, "Yesterday I had the pleasure of talking with M. P. and I have spoken particularly in reference to the elections. M. P. will vote for you." His look fell upon me, with the sharpness of lightning.

"I thank you for the opportunity of showing you what I have in my game bag," he retorted. "You do not deceive me as to the true subject of your conversation with M. P. and I have no desire to buy his vote by a concession degrading to us. My heir



shall never be his son-in-law, understand that. We commenced by the bourgeoisie, but several generations have purified us, and we will not finish by it. If you should find a Venus de Medecis in a house where there has been a shop, I would not call her my niece.

“ If M. P. were a little more learned he might be my associate at the Academy of Mâcon, but he never should be related to me. You have the honor of being a nobleman, preserve your rank. As for your heart, give it to whom you please, but do not drag it before the Mayor. The Rhone traverses the Lèman without losing its color. Traverse, if you like, the bourgeoisie, but preserve your color, do not mix your blood. A sacrifice must be made, in order that promiscuity shall not lead to confusion. We noblemen are supposed to represent loyalty. It is a glory well worth the pain. When it shall be your turn to protect descendants, you will thank me for showing you a profile of truth. You are condemned to marry a *vicountess*. She may not bring you a rose, but she *will* bring you a fine genealogical tree, that will take root in the soil of the domains that I shall leave you. Now, overwhelm me, if you like, with your anger. Assuage your grief by writing an elegy upon it, and an iambic against me. If your purse is long enough, elope with Mlle. P.; get an English blacksmith or an imbecile Spanish priest to marry you. I remind you,

that you are a minor, and we have the power to put you under lock and key. If you succeed in forcing the bolts, say to yourself, that you mean to ruin the family. I shall withdraw your father's annuity, and shall give no dowries to your sisters. I would rather find a Lamartine of the youngest and most obscure branch, to leave my property to. I warn you. I withdraw my nomination, and *you*,—renounce your lady love."

And away he went, whistling to my dog who followed him, showing the great respect that even the animals of the household had for him, and I was left alone in my powerlessness. I thought of the talk that my uncle's arbitrariness would cause in the city, of my dear sisters, whom I should condemn to a convent or poverty; of my father, who would not have money enough to buy a coat for Martinmas; and of my mother, who would silently embrace me, to console me, but would die of sorrow, at the degradation of her children. I was a traitor to all the vows I had made under the moon, and in the entrancing measures of the waltz. The next day I sent a parting letter to Mlle. P., and to submit to all the conditions, set out for Italy."

"Where you met Graziella," I could not help saying.

"Alas! the lyre has seven strings, and I have played upon all of them."

"But Mlle. P. has not inspired your poems. If she had, she would have been surrounded by the same eternal halo of her successors."

"She has not known it, but she has been in all my portraits, and in all my enthusiasms of Elvira and Graziella. I do not exaggerate in saying, that there never was a smile more exquisitely attractive. Neither the Muses, with their golden tresses, as they danced on the sacred mount of Olympus, nor Laura, with her brown locks steeped in the freshness of Vaucluse, could compare with the beauty and charm of this adorable girl."

We were approaching Monceaux. Bijou had not changed his solemn, ministerial trot. A group was coming towards us.

A young student, in uniform, was leading a donkey on which sat an old, wrinkled, shaking woman.

Lamartine glanced at the puce-colored dress, the old hat and the false hair, and exclaimed excitedly,

"Mademoiselle P.!"

After more than forty years, he had met and recognized the light of his youth, in that shadow. She was taking a constitutional with her daughter and grandson.

What a termination of the pastoral, between this incomparable beauty, and that incomparable genius!

Mademoiselle P., bending almost double on her donkey! Lamartine, in the old chariot of Made-

moiselle Bruys ! Lamartine drew back into the depths of the carriage, saying :

“ I will be more generous to her than chance has been to me, I will spare her the pain of recognizing me.”

Was it well that he was so considerate ?

## XX.

### *Lamartine's Beneficence.*

I SHOULD reproach myself, if I did not show how much native simplicity, and goodness, there was in Lamartine, and will give a few instances out of the many, where the *man* appeared through his historical, political and literary glory.

Like Titus, I do not believe that Lamartine ever lay down at night, without having done a good deed. There was this difference, that Titus planned and remembered his, while Lamartine's were spontaneous, and forgotten.

It was an evening during one of his numerous visits to me. We had spent the day in conversation, and walks in the garden. He had said many wonderful things as we strolled under the lime trees, along the river Grôse.

There were still two hours before dinner.

"You would make M. N., very proud and happy, if you went to see him," said I, to Lamartine. "I spend a couple of hours with him every week, and we talk of nobody but you."

M. N., was one of my old neighbors, of the liberal school of the Restoration. He had a great aversion

to Lamartine at first, but gradually had gone to the other extreme, and loved him to fanaticism. Unconsciously, he changed his opinion with the same ease that a bird hops from branch to branch, and because of this volatile nature, he had positively no political influence.

He was a great sufferer from gout, and seldom went away from home.

"Let us go at once," said Lamartine, moving towards the gate.

I stopped him.

"You do not understand that M. N. lives a mile and a half from here, and it is going to rain. I will have the horse harnessed, and we will take the carriage. It is not quite as old as Mlle. Bruys' coupé."

"I would rather walk."

I insisted, pleading that the rain would bring on an attack of rheumatism, and that it would be dark before we could cross the mountain, and the horse would be ready in ten minutes. Nothing would do. He took the umbrella that I was holding, and go, we must.

The rain came down upon us in a regular deluge. I proposed returning, but Lamartine was firm.

He was completely drenched by the time we reached M. N's. but dried himself, merrily, by the fire. The return, over the stony road, in the darkness and storm, gave me a good deal of anxiety. Lam-

artine cheered me with anecdotes of his campaigns, in the mud of Flanders, in 1804. He had a good appetite for his dinner, but, in the evening, he was obliged to confess to a cold.

I wanted to find out his reason for this nocturnal tramp. He had some other motive than simply to be agreeable to M. N. Upon inquiry, I discovered that he had gone into the stable in the morning, and had found one of the horses knee-sprung. This explained the caprice. He would rather run the risk of a sickness, than cause an animal to suffer.

Another day, we went to see one of the neighbors, at Saint-Point. Not meeting anyone in the park, I rode to the door, and rang the bell. After waiting some time, a boy about twelve years old, came along very slowly, with his face half hidden by a monstrous slice of bread and cheese.

"Is your father at home?" asked Lamartine.

"Go and see," said the boy, running away, laughing impudently.

The little rascal was acquainted with Lamartine, and had dined at Saint-Point, only a few days before. We were highly amused at this informal reception, and questioned Mme. B's. perfect success in disciplining her hopeful son. Lamartine took his horse to the stable, and gave me a lesson in attaching a halter, in which he put all the pride and pleasure of an old cavalier. Then we went through the lower



part of the house, searching all the rooms without finding any one. There were recent traces of wheel-tracks on the gravel, and we concluded that M. and Mme. B. had gone away.

The young man's impertinence was premeditated. We had some time to wait, as the horses must rest.

"Let us find the scamp," said Lamartine, "and make him as worthy of admiration as a pupil of Mme. de Genlis." He had hidden behind a tree with his bread and cheese, not giving any assistance, and evidently was enjoying our embarrassment very much.

Lamartine beckoned to him. He only ran a little farther away. We then declared war. Each of us took a side, and enclosed him in a grove. He enjoyed the play, and allowed us to approach, but only under protest.

The boy, though naturally rude and saucy, had really a fine artistic talent for the piano. Lamartine detested a genius at that age, but he sagaciously attacked him on his weak side.

"You must play Hertz, variations on *"La Violette,"* for us," said he.

He had learned to know this piece from having had his morning hours of inspiration invaded by the agonies of a tortured piano.

The boy was touched, and became gracious at once.

"I would like very much to play for you," he replied, "but mamma told me, the other day, that you did not understand music."

"He is perfect!" said Lamartine in a low tone.

However to accomplish his purpose, he took the youngster by the arm and led him towards the house. His cries were more piercing than the peacocks, that were spreading their beautiful plumage in the sun. and they reached as they always do, the maternal heart.

Mme. B. appeared on the door-steps, terror-stricken. She had a suspicion of the difficulty, and hurried to meet M. de Lamartine.

"I was asleep on the sofa, and you have given me a great fright, opening and shutting all the doors in the house. I am sure Philibert has been impolite, and has done all that he could not to give you any information. I will speak to his father about it, and we will punish him severely." Then she commenced the chastisement by kissing him.

Lamartine had no fear of any serious consequences, so following his generous inclinations, he determined to leave an impression.

"Philibert has been a most charming host," said he, "he has exhausted himself in aiding us. He has taken the horses to the stable, hunted for the servants, and not finding them, has brought refreshments himself. He has tried to converse, and shows a great

deal of intelligence. In fact he has quite represented you, Madame."

Philibert was conscious of the satire, and at the same time encouraged. He did not have the weakness to protest against the praise.

"What was he crying for, then," said Mme. B. judiciously.

The objection was overwhelming.

"He was crying on our account, Madame," said Lamartine. "We had not been able to find you."

These small details would have no value, if they did not relate to Lamartine. They come back to me because they charmed and amused me then, and show that his innate goodness was unfailing. He ignored, even to a shade of sensitiveness, everything that did not touch the honor of his country, or his ideas.

He has been reproached for not knowing how to hate. This is true. But it does not prove that he did not know how to love.

No writer has ever allowed himself to be more easily criticized. He would make a correction, at the least objection, unless a mental protestation forbade.

One day, when he had changed a fine line to suit a professor, who had made a criticism as narrow as a grammarian could make it, I said to him,

"You do not respect yourself enough in your writings."

"Perhaps not," said he. "That comes from my unfortunate facility, for a cast is scarcely broken, before I mould another from its fragments. These gentlemanly Academicians amuse me beyond everything. They do not see that it is *we*, who are making the grammar over," he added with a kind of pride.

He received immense quantities of newspapers. Most of them spoke of him only at the time of his great struggles, and it was very rare that these cups of enthusiasm did not contain a drop of bitterness from some reactionary source.

When these annoyances occupied all the space, he smiled as he read the invectives, and did not even stipulate that they should be well written, in order to forgive them at once.

"I employ the Mithridates method," said he. "I take a little poison, every day, so that it may not affect me."

"A person cannot live very long on such a diet," said I.

"You will see me among the nineties. In my family, the bones are bronze. When I was young, I had a passion for sudden death, but I am condemned to an old age."

Yet he had the weakness never to tell his age.

I do not know why he always claimed to have been born in 1793, when the true date was 1790. He told this so often, that he finally believed it. His youthful

appearance and vigor made him feel young, and he thought that he owed it to his reputation to disguise the certificate of his birth.

There was a tacit agreement between his sisters to be silent on the question. When strangers were present they quietly accepted the exaggeration, by which he reconstructed his civil estate.

The truth was declared one morning before me. One of the sisters possessed the quality of frankness. Lamartine had just proved that he was the younger.

There were some remains of coquetry in her, and naturally she was indignant.

"Alphonse," said she, "I dare you to tell the name of my God-father, aloud."

We understood at once that Lamartine was the god-father. The sister healed the wound by adding.

"And say too, that he has written '*Les Girondins*,' every word of which is true."

This amiable woman still lives. She has been very handsome, and when we want to see Lamartine's profile again, we can find it in that retreat where she so nobly lives with the memories of a great brother's glory.

She was a little of a Bonapartist, an exception in the family. There were interminable discussions between her brother and herself. After freeing her mind, she would remember who her antagonist was,

and always yield, except on one point ; the culinary art.

Lamartine had his own ideas of cookery, and pursued them relentlessly in theory, and even condescended to fight his point. I have often seen the sister leave the table in tears, and the next day, I was sure to meet Lamartine on his way to her room. Remembering that he had offended her, he would leave his brightest page to go and console her. He would carry candies, that probably had grown stale in his closet, and insist that her miserable little dog had much more intelligence than his greyhounds, and call to mind the spring-times of long ago, when Eugénie used to attract all the eyes of Mâcon to the graceful undulations of her white dress, and the rosy tints of her cheeks, as she came out of the new church after the mass. He would exhaust himself in these demonstrations, which she always allowed to be prolonged, and he never left her until she had smiled forgiveness. It was an hour lost for work and one gained for happiness.

He gave constant proof of his inexhaustible sweetness of disposition.

Nothing was more distasteful to him than to be disturbed in the morning at his work. Mme. de Lamartine had built a chapel at Monceaux, out of an old theatre, and the curé of Pressé came Sundays, to say mass. Once in a while, not to grieve his wife, Lam

artine would leave his work and go to mass. He carried under his arm an "Imitation," a "Bossuet," or a "Rousseau," just as it happened, but he did not read them. He communed with himself, and found within, a deistical faith, superior to all dogmas.

I have said that an unhappy chance had sent his old friend and physician to die at the château. His death was a sorrow to the whole family, and almost caused a quarrel. Dr. Pascal had always been a free thinker, and confessed with dignity to Voltairianism, whenever the occasion required it. Madame de Lamartine and the other ladies desired the intervention of the Church, and their passionate religious ardor led them to introduce a priest into the death-chamber, at night, thus disobeying Lamartine, who respected the wishes of his dying friend. Lamartine learned of the pious stratagem. He did not make any scene, but desiring to remove the injury done to the conscience, and, if not to correct the evil, at least to bring the soul back to the atmosphere of freedom, he opened the door before dawn, and bending over the bed, by some secret divine light he re-illuminated the reason already in the shadow of death. When he closed the half-shut eyes, they had seen the true God.

Lamartine was comforted for the departure of his friend, and not to give offense to the neighboring priest, he allowed them to say that the doctor had died in the sacraments of the church. How many



acts of watchfulness and secret kindness, unknown even to his friends, has he performed in this outpouring of benevolence and of true charity!

Some have said that he did not seem to regret his dead friends. That was true only in appearance. I never saw him shed tears. He was saddened by the absence of his friends, but he did not believe in death. He felt a certainty, to which conscience gave almost mathematical proof, that he should see the departed again. The communion of souls and exchange of words were alone interrupted.

One day after a political act of great significance, he said to me,

“I would like to know if Béranger is satisfied.”

Béranger had been dead eight years.

Lamartine regretted, but did not grieve. Grief seemed to him a weakness, and a concession to the doctrine of annihilation. He respected God too much to admit that he would destroy a creature in whom He had implanted a belief in the immortality of the soul. I have often asked him how Immortality was presented to him, and I have frequently talked with him of the luminous theory of the spheres, of endless incarnations in renewed humanities, and successive purifications. I was very much convinced. He inclined towards the probability of the theory but never gave a decided adhesion. He was seeking the solution of the great problem.

"I shall never find it," said he, "but you shall know of what I have had a glimpse. I will write a confession of faith when I am very old, and the book will contain, I hope, the honey of all my seasons."

He never thought himself old enough to write it literally, but as Hugo is doing now, he traced a living page every day. He prayed by acts of forgiveness and generosity, which gushed from him as from a fountain head, passionate or refreshing, according to circumstances. The chaplets of holy men and women, are made by devoutly stringing shells, or beads. Lamartine's was made by the continuous grains of kindness, rolling from the abundance of his heart. We could spend hours in telling such beads, but we would rather try and follow the path, along which like a prodigal he has scattered them.

The history of Léon Bruys d'Ouilly speaks too eloquently of Lamartine's vigilance not to repeat it.

Thanks to him, in spite of the overwhelming misfortunes that pursued Bruys, sadness never came into a life made only for smiles.

I have already said that Bruys fascinated us, in our youth, by his elegant misconduct. After many fancies, he fixed upon one, as he would attach himself to a poet. She was an Italian countess, married, and free to act as she pleased. To us, she seemed to have come directly from the romances of Mme. Sand, full of fascinations and daring adventures.

Her own romance was so well known, and was so sure to terminate in a marriage, that Bruys presented me to her as a future cousin. There were all sorts of passionate conceits in the intimacy, beauty, wit, the traditions of an illustrious family, long journeys, winters in Paris, an admiring world, and lastly a husband who was making his preparations to leave a widow. They seemed to travel through Europe in a golden-wheeled chariot, which illuminated the road it passed over. The bond was a violation of social order, but in such good taste, and with so many justifiable reasons, that the horror of the name was lost.

I have also intimated, that when every thing was ready for a legal consummation, the old count dead, the grand villa built on the Mâconnais, suddenly there arose complications, making a marriage impossible, and thus, a love that had endured for ten years, was extinguished at the moment it was to have been legalized. The notary was inadmissible in this long scene of masked balls and promenades among the fountains, music, and gondolas of Italy.

The forsaken one buried herself in tears as sincere as ever came from mortal eyes, but she sufficiently recovered a few years after, to make a marriage of great renown. Léon tried to be tragic, but melancholy never came naturally to him, not even in his complete ruin. The marble for the villa, had absorbed the last of his patrimony. He was obliged

to sell his woods and lands, little by little, and he determined to struggle by the sole courage of his will, though his muscles had not been rubbed with the oil of strength.

He had marked talent for many things, and yet without Lamartine he would have died of hunger upon a mountain of irresolute faculties. His political and religious convictions did not call him to a crusade, which at any rate, was lacking to an epoch when the papal zouaves had not been created. So he took to agriculture, as it belonged to a nobleman. He went to his stables, or to the fields that he was clearing, but if a rhyme was suggested, or by chance he met a shepherdess, he halted. The wheat never came out of the furrows, the grapes never went to the press, and his last penny was buried in a compost heap.

Then he thought of music. He sang and composed well. One day in Venice he entered a circle surrounding an itinerant musician, on the Place St. Mark. Neapolitan ballads flowed from his lips, and money flowed into his purse. He was applauded vociferously, but would not tell his name. He invited his partner to supper and gave him the receipts of the impromptu concert. But what had been an accidental success, could not become a resource. He turned to his paint brushes, which he handled with as much skill as he did the guitar. He hired a

studio in the Latin quarter, and had the courage and ability, at forty-five years of age, to renew youth. He followed the path immortalized by Mürger. There, he met bagpipes, but not fortune. His pastels, undefined and pastoral, resembled a romance of the Restoration far too strongly. Purchasers never came. Due bills accumulated over the pipes we smoked in his company. We did our best to disguise our contributions. They were extremely insufficient to the needs of a bachelor, who had so many luxurious and idle hours to his account. It was then that Lamartine intervened. To give was so much a part of his nature, that he always found an opportunity of doing it acceptably. In the country, in the attic, in Paris, and in the peasant's cottage where Bruys finally took refuge, Lamartine always came, at the critical moment, with a note of one thousand francs in his hand, and begged so ingeniously, that he succeeded in leaving it upon the table, without offending a refined susceptibility. He never desired to know whether the money was applied to pressing needs, or to diversions, more or less orthodox. He simply desired to continue the thread of happiness which had been interwoven in all the years of his friend's life. At a time when he was much involved in debt, and Bruys destitute, he sent a cart containing food enough for a year, so that Bruys might come oftener to see him at Monceaux.

Lamartine was more than paternal, he was maternal in all his characteristics. He wrote twenty pages more, that Bruys' purse might be filled, and his joyous nature revived. Instead of revolving about a countess, this facile lover, like a hero of the eighteenth century, found plenty of amusement in adoring all the little Suzons of the field.

Bruys never was seriously earnest, except in friendship and politics. An offshoot of a legitimist branch, and educated by a priest, the horror of clericalism had driven him to liberalism, and his admiration for Lamartine had led him to republicanism. He sold his last acres to sustain the "Bien Public," and to travel through the country to spread the tenets of Democracy. He held so strictly to his principles, that he would forget to laugh after dinner, if it was a question of defending them.

I have told of the subprefecture that he so indignantly refused, December 5th, 1851. At that time, he did not have an overcoat for winter.

In private, Lamartine always spoke with pleasure of what Bruys d'Ouilly cost him. He considered it his duty to provide for him. If Bruys had been the incarnation of ingratitude, instead of one of the best friends in the world, Lamartine would have done the same for him. His genius had caprices; his heart, none.

One afternoon we mounted our horses to go and

see our friend, who had secluded himself for several years in a farm-house at Vergisson. Lamartine was going to do a kind act, and he commenced by a practical joke. I was a very good horseman, thanks to long legs and much practice. Lamartine had several horses, but he chose to send me a mare—having all the abandon of a greyhound, under ordinary circumstances not a disagreeable quality, but disadvantageous when one desired to give his whole attention to listening. I utilized the caracoles of my steed as punctuation marks, and succeeded in losing nothing of the conversation.

It is a charming road along the rocks of the Vergisson, and recalls the Italian windings of the Corniche.

We passed by the house of a beautiful and excellent lady, Mme. de S——, who had been maid-of-honor to the Queen of Portugal. She was standing behind the gate, in all the radiance of her youth, surrounded by her children.

“Where are you going?” said she to Lamartine.

“I am going to see if I can give as much pleasure to the heart, as you do to the eyes,” he replied.

“You do not come to see us often enough, M. de Lamartine, so we come to the road, every day, to stop you for a moment. We never shall be tired waiting for you.”

She kept her word faithfully. She waited for him



on his way to Saint-Point. Not many years after, when, with so much grief, the sad cortège carried back all that remained of his glory, it met the tomb of her who had so fascinated us by her wondrous grace.

We arrived at Vergisson. Léon occupied a little dilapidated room in a vintager's cottage, which one of his relations had lent him, and where they used to go for the vintage. In the autumn, the rains dripped through the old roof upon the bed, and in winter, the cold north winds filled the room with smoke, but nothing disturbed the serenity and resignation of its occupant. He, who once adorned the fine suits of Chevreuil, now wore an old patched blouse. He preserved a remnant of luxury in his destitution, and brought from his closet cigarettes of Mount Carmel tobacco, given to him by a pilgrim, in the days of his wealth. His only recreation was an occasional day of hunting, with a neighbor, to whom his coming had been a good fortune.

"How do you occupy yourself, now?" said Lamartine.

Bruys colored.

He had commenced his fourth enterprise.

"I am writing a poem," said he, "and when it is published I shall be able to pay all my debts. I have already written twelve thousand lines."

He evidently felt that there was no illusion in the

value of his poetical conceptions; but the noble persistency with which he demanded his living from music, painting, poetry, and all the high arts, made him mistake his courage for success, and his visions for bank-bills. Lamartine knew, very well, that he would be the future editor of the poem. He wanted to reward the recluse at once, and he insisted upon hearing a few of the cantos. The measure, limpid and graceful, was traced in the Lamartinian style, but lacked decided color.

Lamartine never raised his eyebrows, though he could not help seeing that he had been, as it were, washed out. Bruys was writing at the rate of three hundred lines a day.

"And when you are tired of writing these sweet things, what do you do with the rest of your time?" said Lamartine, "I shall be as needy as you some day, my dear friend, and I come to Vergisson to study a plan of practical philosophy."

"The peasants come into the court in the evening, and I put a candle on the cask, and read Lamartine to them."

"Do they understand?" asked the author of "Jocelyn."

"I only give them what relates to politics. I explain the Republic to them. I recall fragments of your speeches, and weave them into my own. I demonstrate to them, in my way, or I might almost

dare to say in *your* way, that the cultivation of the vine, the comfort and well-being of the peasant, peace in the household, and, in fact, the whole conduct of life, is in the Republic, which alone can assure Order. I advise them to think more of God, and less of their priests. I compose songs for them, always telling of Liberty. By the votes of the community at the next election, you will see whether or not I have succeeded."

Very soon after, we heard the sound of voices and sabots in the street. Our horses had attracted the vintagers at work on the hill-side, and it was soon noised abroad, that Lamartine had come to see his friend. The court could not contain a great many, but it was filled. Old and young assembled, to see Lamartine come out. They did not dare to call him. He did not wait, but went at once, to satisfy an affectionate curiosity.

It was not an occasion for a speech, which under any circumstance, Lamartine disliked. He shook hands with them, and said a few words which I have remembered.

"My friends, you have sacrificed your time to come and see me. You leave the plough and spade, to come to a man, who has also tried to work with a useful instrument, and who spends his time in clearing other fields than these, but which belong to you, as well. You are told, that the Republic is a sacrifice.

It is also a recompense. *We* sacrifice to it, what we call our luxuries. *You* must sacrifice your distrusts. Be no longer suspicious of the rich ! Let them not be to you as the bronze men of the fountains in the public gardens, that spout water alone from their open mouths ! Instead of water, we often shed our blood. But what of that ! The recompense I mean, is Liberty for all, the perfection of Order. Labor under the eye of God. Fraternity,—the Republic. Let your hearts seek to intertwine like the vines you cultivate, on the hills, and in future seasons, there shall come forth from the fruit of brotherly-love, the clear pure wine of Liberty !”

He almost forgot his simple audience, and was talking philosophy to Bruys and me. The sun was setting as he mounted his horse and rode away, amid the benedictions of the crowd. He did not spoil the day by leaving any gold.

His kindness followed Bruys, even to installing him in a little house at Mâcon. He varied his manner of contributing. Sometimes he sent strangers to buy pictures of the noble artist, as if for themselves, at unheard-of prices ; at other times he boldly carried his money, that he pretended to have saved from the remains of his fortune, and said that he would be glad to have it again, when Bruys, whose reputation had now begun, had earned all the money he wanted.

This dear friend won his place above by his cheerful resignation, his persevering patriotism, and by his light-heartedness. In spite of tragic experiences which would have been crushing to any one else, he was a living proof that God sometimes creates truly happy beings.

Bruys died just as a small inheritance was coming to him. He was admirable to the last moment, and descended to the tomb, surrounded by the aureole of his master, who was holding his hand.

Undoubtedly, he left behind a track furrowed by his many levities, but he never had a hostile thought, and never said a bitter word. Twenty years of his life he gave to the Republic, and whoever has done that, has loved much, and to him shall much be for given.

## XXI

### *Last Years.*

LET us return to rue de la Ville l'Evêque and to those last years. The little house has seen many joys, and hidden many sorrows. Bailiffs, and physicians with their ineffectual remedies have come at all times. It was between those walls, dilapidated like himself, that this grand life, full of heroism and nobility, was to gradually crumble in sorrow, and almost humiliation.

The wind that whistled around the corners of the streets brought there and found there only lamentations.

Lamartine went there to live about the close of 1849. It was a narrow cottage, in the rear of a dark court. There was a door, on a level with the pavement, opening into a contracted vestibule, on one side of which, was a spiral staircase, leading to the only story. On the other side, was an apartment, once a conservatory, now transformed into an office, where, for eighteen years, M. and Mme. Gresset kept the books, registered the subscriptions and the numbers of the "Cours familier de Littérature." Crossing a dining-room, so dismal that it was never used, one

reached the modest parlor, which became grand, when Lamartine was the host. Beyond this was a boudoir that an easel entirely filled, and at the left hand, was a little hall where the meals were served.

The only luxury attached to the house, was a little garden, where Lamartine had twenty feet of green grass, for playing with his dogs. At first, the sun used to shine upon the house, but afterwards the improvements to the Hotel Beauveau, now ministry of the interior, threw the shadow upon this poor little corner of light.

The poet took frequent rambles, but no longer found poetical inspirations, nor did the orator find any more orations.

He never came into that house, followed by the demonstrations and acclamations, which are re-iterated in the great enthusiasm of his words and writings.

In leaving rue de l'Université, he left his glory. Those who knew him only at rue de la Villa l'Eveque, never knew the real Lamartine.

He was haunted by one thought ; to be free from debt. The vinedressers of Monceaux, to whom he owed much, and could not pay, came, constantly, like spectres before him. He forgot that he had enriched them by his liberality, as well as by his acquisitions, and always imagined that he should see them coming to Paris, with his bank-bills in their



hands, and from this vain hope, came those financial combinations, which, finally exhausted him.

Mme. de Lamartine never left the bleeding path. She was associated with her husband in work, literary research, and in the sacrifice of her fortune. Her admiration led her to liberality. She did not question whether there were absolute necessities, or foolish caprices. After a few years, feeling that nothing could close a gulf kept open by hazardous speculations, she ceased to trouble herself about the future, and gave no more advice. Her counsels were much missed, for she possessed an unerring judgment. She devoted her time to painting and sculpture. For the chimney-piece in the house of the Bois-de-Boulogne, given them by the Municipality, she painted a series of medallions of distinguished poets that were worthy of a master. She renounced her luxuries with simplicity and grace. She was several years older than Lamartine, and old age marked her earlier.

She did not lack courage to grow old gracefully, but she did not want to be bent, nor to have white hair.

She was always expecting that some political catastrophe would proscribe them, and kept brave and active, ready for the long journey. Her health, always delicate, succumbed in the struggle against the invasion of age.

The drawing-room of rue de la Ville l'Evêque was well filled every evening by dear friends, and often strangers who desired to be presented. Lamartine would say a few words in English or Italian, Mme. de Lamartine was always present, but no longer directed the conversation, even when sleep overtook the master of the house. She reserved herself for the correspondence. Ronchaud, Alexandre, M. d'Esgrigny have many letters of those last years, showing how brightly the pale flame burned in that soul.

She died in Paris in 1867.

Her sickness was long, and painful in its last stages. Lamartine was fastened to his bed by the iron bands of rheumatism. The nurse went from one bed to the other. The two chambers were separated by a hall, and not a word of parting was exchanged. The death agony warned Lamartine of what was passing.

I saw him the next day still in bed. The attendants were closing the coffin. No tears shone in his firm eyes, nor did his voice tremble when he told me of the death, but his brief words told more powerfully than tears, the void left in his heart, and the ties of heroic friendship that had been broken.

Sobs could not have moved one so much as these stony words. Although the family was still very numerous, Mlle. Valentine de Cessiat Lamar-

tine, the niece of whom I have already spoken, took her aunt's position, and moreover, continued the task in correcting proofs and writing from dictation. Lamartine had always held the pen himself, but now he frequently left it in the beautiful hand of Mlle. Valentine, who carried her pious flattery even to imitating his hand-writing. Sometimes, now, when I have the pleasure of receiving a letter from her, I tremble. Lamartine seems to live again, and sends me one of his morning notes.

. . . . .  
I have searched my memory so as not to omit anything I know of Lamartine. I should feel reproached to leave on the path a single souvenir, without piously raising it. I have said that I should show the true Lamartine, and I am sure that truth cannot destroy his nobleness. I trample in the dust of his feet, to the exhaustion of my forces.

One evening he was more thoughtful and dejected than usual. The little parlor was empty. The visitors had not yet arrived. I had asked several questions, and only received monosyllabic replies. I anticipated a domestic catastrophe, and though fearing that my interest might be indiscreet, I could not remain in an uncertainty, so scarcely daring to make myself heard, I said, "What is the matter with you?"

"I have come to a perplexing problem," said he.

"I am troubled by a question that my conscience cannot answer. I have never been so puzzled by any woman, as I am by this man."

"What man?"

"A perfect man, and yet lacking. An Evangelist and a Helvetius; Victor Schoelcher."

I was acquainted with the man. I bowed, Lamartine rose. Action was necessary to him, to shake off an impression.

"He came to me with his noble brow and pleasant face," said Lamartine. "I had never met him. He told me of his life, as a republican and apostle. He marches as straight along his road, as if he were guided by a star. He has done more for the amelioration of the black race, than Wilberforce, Louis Blanc, or I, or all of the Provisionary government together. He has lived a life of self-forgetfulness, justice is his respiration; sacrifice his action and right his word. Every inflection makes one think of heaven. The saints and martyrs have not had more charity than he. I was moved to the very depths of my soul, in listening to him. I took his hands in mine, and thanked him for doing so much for God. "I am a Materialist," said he, "and I do not believe in God." Then he went away, leaving me in an inexplicable state of wonder. Can a man draw so much virtue from himself? Is it natural to work so conscientiously for a Divine master and still

ignore Him? Is it not an attempt to make his merit a blasphemy? Is God indifferent if actions prove what the lip denies? Why this exception? Absolute negation leads as directly to servitude as the Zuyder-Zee leads to the North Pole. Cæsarism has its recruits, already formed in regiments, in the army of the atheists.

“And they are legion! I am not anxious about eternal morality, which always will float, but it is for the Republic of the future, that I tremble. The Republic is the ideal of Justice, and the workmen of Nature alone, will never build the Holy City. From the marshes of Materialism, there will come forth twenty Marats for every Schœlcher. Never has my admiration for one been so wounded! Still after an hour’s conversation, I love and admire him, and I would like to give him a part of my soul, or rather, for he has a soul of his own—working continually, I would like to make that soul burst forth from his lips, by the liberation of his virtues,” Lamartine fell sorrowfully back into his chair.

Those who came that evening found him very silent. His preoccupation lasted for some hours, though usually, he came quickly out of himself.

Schœlcher had irritated and charmed him at the same time. I remembered this conversation, when, at the National Assembly, I had the honor of sitting by this philosopher, who has not changed in his char-

ity or scepticism. If I feel doubtful in regard to any question, I go to him, knowing where to find a true solution. His conscience is more than just; it has a warmth drawn from a celestial source. Schœlcher pardons me for being a spiritualist, as I pardon him for being a priest without knowing it; a priest in the highest sense, separated from all symbols, and though denying God, taking his stand with Jesus Christ. If the spirit of the Sermon on the Mount comes into the Assembly, at Versailles, I am sure that it rests more upon those who ask for amnesty, than upon those who do not.

My other associate and friend, Laurent Pichat, came to Lamartine about this same time. He was one of the directors of the "*Revue de Paris*," with Maxime du Camp, and Louis Ulbach. The editorship, in those strong poetic hands, met all the political aspirations, ennobling them in exciting them to action.

Every copy of the review sent forth a light, like the aurora of the future Republic.

Pichat had just written an enthusiastic article apropos of a demonstration that the schools wanted to make in honor of Lamartine, so Lamartine invited him to come and see him.

"My only consolation for never having met Armand Carrel, has been the hope, that, some day, I should see you," said he, when he met Lamartine.

"By your character, and talent, you are one of the forces of the Democracy, and you bring Carrel back to us."

The conversation begun by this justifiable parallel, soon embraced all topics. I do not know how it happened to float from music to dogs.

On the subject of music, Lamartine went through the whole scale of his eloquence.

"If I could obtain the gift of measuring my faculties by my aspirations, I would ask to be made a great musician," said he. "The language of words has always seemed lacking to me, to render the resonance and color of all that vibrates within us. The language of sound is infinite. Speech reaches only a certain height, and falls back upon the speaker. A musical sound goes beyond the horizon, and draws the singer into the sky. The alphabet is soon exhausted. The orchestra has no limit. Music can do without translators. I would give a thousand 'Lacs' for one 'Pastorale.' If I repeat a rhyme, Fido goes to sleep; if I sing a line, Fido understands me, and howls, for I sing out of time."

Then Lamartine came to one of his dearest texts, "intelligence of animals."

"I always carry a piece of sugar in my pocket for my dogs," he continued. "This morning in taking my bath, I left my pantaloons on the floor. Fido



sniffed at them, put his nose into the pocket on the right side, and found nothing. This first movement was only instinct. That is true. Now wait for the second. Fido reflects. He remembers that there is a second pocket. He turns the pantaloons over, finds the other pocket, and is rewarded. Are there many men who would know as well as this animal, how to reflect upon the situations, and turn the pockets?"

I give this example among thousands, to show how many charms, and happy surprises, there were in Lamartine's familiar conversation.

I can scarcely believe that his presence is not in the National Assembly with his disciples, who are leading his Republic, and trying to make it immortal. I feel sure that his influence guides our hands towards the ballot-box, where France is.

. . . . .  
Lamartine continued to give occasional dinners, in spite of his reduced circumstances. I was seldom invited, for the table was small, and there were always many obligations to satisfy in Paris. We were overwhelmed with his hospitality during the summer and autumn, at Saint-Point, and at Monceaux.

I once said to him, that I had seldom seen Alexander Dumas, père ; so he invited me with one of our neighbors to meet the author of "Monte-Cristo." There was also an ex-consul, an intimate friend of

Stendhal, and a journalist, who did not keep his wit for his newspaper.

Lamartine was very entertaining. He roused himself from his engrossing cares, and shared his "verve" with his guests. I have never understood so well the particular charm and attraction of the table reunions among the Romans, or the "petits soupers," of the 18th century. Dumas gave the material of a whole new volume of impressions of travel. His great sonorous laugh was a cordial and a delight. His witticisms flowed from him, as naturally as the ruddy juice from the grapes. We only asked him *not* to restrain himself. Mlle. Valentine was present, and he did not pass the limit of propriety. Lamartine could not permit himself to be surpassed in this contest of wit. He was as amusing as if Voltaire, Benjamin Constant, and Mme. de Staël had spoken through his lips. He seemed to forget that the Republic was dead.

Stendhal's friend and the journalist were men of spontaneity, yet they could only send back their approbation by their affectionate mirth and gestures.

My neighbor, who passed most of his time in the village library, understood all that was said, for they spoke the true French language. I deplore the loss of so many pearls thrown away in the Lethean waters of my memory.

I would have given much to have taken notes of that event.

Contrary to the habits of the house, the dinner was prolonged, and the little garden was already enveloped in darkness, when we entered the parlor. The windows were thrown open, and cigars lighted. One of Dumas' faults was, not to smoke. He brought up many great examples for his defense, and chose, inconsistently, among others, Napoleon, who belonged to a generation of snuff-takers. Then, leaving his anecdotes, he departed at once in a bold panegyric upon the conqueror.

Lamartine became serious at once. There were certain questions to which he could not be indifferent. No one touched his moral religion without a protest. I have always suspected that Dumas wanted to rest, and challenged a speech to aid his digestion.

He obtained it.

Lamartine blamed Dumas, as he constantly did Béranger, for having written for the Empire. He could forgive anything but that. He always said that M. de Sade had done less harm to humanity, in writing *Justine*, than General Foy, by saluting the "Column" so frequently. He believed that Saint-Helene had been a too gentle expiation for so many violations. He raised the hero's laurels, and found beneath the brutal crimes of misery, and insincerity,

He could not admit any extenuating circumstances, for him, who had trampled out the breath of the Republic, under the heels of his grenadiers. He saw, standing before the justice of God, a man clothed in hideous purple, who had emptied the sluices of peace, for which so many streams of blood had flowed, and he declared that nothing could purchase the pardon of the assassin, and that Cartouche should have granted mercy to the Duc d'Enghien.

He demolished the prodigious Dumas, piece by piece, as if he had been a minister, and an accomplice of Bonaparte.

Dumas had the modesty not to reply.

He carried away his page of history fastened to him.

However, he was not willing to rest under the malediction of Demosthenes. The good fellow found that there was nothing to do, and after a few facetious remarks, scarcely relevant, he managed to effect his escape, first poking Lamartine in the ribs, and saying, "Farceur!"

I ask Dumas' pardon, but this is the truth.

This was the last time that I saw Lamartine in the full possession of his faculties. His exquisite goodness remained, but the oil in the lamp was gradually diminishing. Occasional gleams flashed forth, but they grew more and more rare.

The slow work of disorganization had commenced in this homeric brain.

I could not believe in such a great misfortune. I often went to rue de la Ville l'Évêque, knowing that the morning hours were clear, and that he was writing those remarkable "*Mémoires*," which appeared last year.

He was inclined to absent-mindedness, and was very silent. At the sight of those statuesque features, and those deep penetrating eyes, and hearing again the harmonious accents of his voice, I became hopeful that by some unexpected effort he would revive.

I remember a sad circumstance. I had been impressed by the biblical color of the life of Mahomet, in his beautiful "*Histoire de la Turquie*." I thought that it contained the elements of a great religious opera.

Kaasbah, the mountain of Koran, the War of the Faith, the Passion, and Paradise, all that was heroic and emotional, fascinated me. Music trembled in every page. I read it to my friend Vaucorbeil, who is an artist.

I versified the text.

Vaucorbeil took a year and a half to write the music for it. What it is, will be known some future day, for it is impossible that the half-open doors of the Opera shall not entirely open to receive this impassioned and majestic music.

I do not believe that any subject has ever lent

more to the fancy, sadness, and exuberance of harmonious inspiration, nor do I believe that Vaucorbeil has failed in his different interpretations.

After the libretto was finished, conventionality demanded that we should ask Lamartine's consent.

I told him of my attempt. He was enthusiastic, and proposed writing more verses, if I needed them. I am sorry now that I did not accept. I asked permission to bring Vaucorbeil, whom he had met at Jules Le Fèvre's.

The visit was arranged for the next day.

There was an air of mystery in our introduction to the house. Lamartine kept us waiting a long time. What had happened! Had he had a stroke?

Vaucorbeil and I walked up and down the little garden, commenting upon the singularity of the detention.

At last, Lamartine, more carefully dressed than usual, came to the door of the drawing-room. Mlle. Valentine, who had supported him so far, disappeared in the rays of the setting sun. Lamartine advanced to meet us, and led us to seats. He fell back into his chair, as if exhausted. He thanked us quietly, for the honor we desired to do him, in carrying into Opera the character of Mahomet, as he had seen him. I expressed my admiration for the traits of gentleness and humanity, he had given to the phys-

iogonomy of the Prophet, in which Voltaire had discovered only the false mask of fanaticism. He accepted the investiture, with a smile.

Vaucorbeil explained the color, so to speak, of the music he was going to make, and, that the tints should be exact, he questioned the poet upon his travels in the Orient. He had an attractive and picturesque way of asking questions. The replies were few, but it was not for lack of good-will. That dazzling and rapid talker in every form of language, sought sadly for expression. The chord had been over-strained and vibrated no longer. He listened to us, but our own sentences were broken by the sad contemplation of his helpless attitude.

We struck the golden bell in vain.

To prolong the conversation was a fatigue for all of us, and when we rose to come away, there came over his face an expression of relief. He was no longer restrained by efforts, whose powerlessness was comprehensible to him. He found a happy word to say at parting.

Vaucorbeil said, "If we are successful in obtaining a representation, you will do us the honor of assisting at the opening?"

"Certainly," replied Lamartine, with a tinge of melancholy, "but I shall assist from the paradise of Mahomet."

There were tears in Vaucorbeil's eyes as he



crossed the court. He had not seen Lamartine since those grand days of the Hotel-de-Ville.

There remained a long line of friends to follow this mournful spectacle. Ronchaud, Chamborran, Texier, Louis Ulbach, D'Esgrigny, Rolland, Desplaces and others. We often met at Lamartine's in the evening. Mlle. Valentine received the ladies, who kept up an impassioned interest. Russians and Americans could not go through Paris without saluting Lamartine. He would rise from his chair, which was always placed in the corner by the little chimney, to greet them. He was always carefully dressed, and smiled kindly upon all, but both the smile and the dress seemed imposed upon him.

The gravest and most important questions of which, once, he had been the creator, floated about him unheeded.

Had he become indifferent from his cerebral weakness, or, had he already plunged into the contemplation of another world? I hold to the latter idea, for sometimes a light came into his eyes, and in a soft voice, he murmured words, proving that he still loved us. From these heart whispers we dared to hope.

A Hungarian physician undertook his restoration. I do not know how he imposed upon the confidence of Lamartine, who always had presence of mind

enough, to keep the doctors away from his bedside. Undoubtedly, he was brought by the pitying hand of Mlle. Valentine.

Lamartine did not rise now until ten o'clock. He no longer read. Even his pen rested quietly on the table. The doctor thought that his remedies would have more effect under the sun at Monceaux, and in the early spring-time, ordered Lamartine's departure.

But we all knew that God had gently fixed the hour for meeting the soul, which was no longer conscious of its earthly temple.

## XXII.

### *Lamartine's Death.*

THE Lamartine, before whom I burned the incense of my homage, was so admirable and so pure, that I turned with mournful regret, towards the sad image that remained.

To tell of those sorrowful days, would only be to relate again and again the passionate worship and pious prostrations of the nieces. It was not permitted that he, who had recounted so many wonderful deaths, should be sensible of his own.

He never awoke.

Priests of the highest intelligence came to see him. Père Hyacinthe, who was then meditating his rupture with the official church, spent a fortnight at Saint-Point, the year before, but Lamartine was no longer himself. The curé of the Madeleine, destined to fall so soon by the balls of the Commune, in his efforts for charity and peace, was sent for by Mlle. Valentine. No conversation was possible. Lamartine could not dispute with this old man, who held the crucifix over him. That assimilation was spared him.

Had he not climbed his Calvary, and for twenty

years had he not, by the expanse of his genius, re-kindled the extinct fire of Spiritualism in the souls of his generation? Had not every speech, and every act, been a divine lesson? Would he not carry before the Sovereign Master, his sheaf of virtues and sacrifices, and would not the grain germinate in increasing abundance above?

He was also spared physical pain. His last hours were spent in taking the seeds from grapes that he could hardly carry to his mouth; and in turning the leaves of a picture-book, which he understood less than a child. When the last page was finished, he looked up to the sky, as if in search of a star. That breath, which had intoxicated, fortified and controlled multitudes, was quenched in a night of February.

February! the grandest month of his life!

It was also the month of his new birth!

The seal upon his lips was broken. He spoke elsewhere, I went frequently to ask for him, but did not enter. The last time that I was there, was the day of his death. I met M. Guizot in the garden. Tears trembled in his eyes, when he brought back the sad intelligence. Lamartine was so beloved, that even those whom he had dethroned, wept for him.

The chamber of death was thronged with visitors, all day long. A wreath of red roses shone over his head, in the light of the tapers. His face, like

sculptured marble, breathed the peace of another realm.

I found myself before the dead master, with Carnot, and Garnier-Pagès,—all that remained of the provisional government. Pelletan knelt there with me. I was not present at the obsequies, which took place at Saint-Point.

The progress of the funeral cortège, across a country covered with snow, attended by the most illustrious in literature, and by a mourning throng of the peasants, was followed by the thought of France and the eyes of the world.

Lamartine considered an oration pronounced over the tomb of one already in communion with God, a profanation. Once only, for the funeral ceremony of Armand Marrast, a political necessity compelled him to break his rule. He had forbidden a word said over the earth moved for him. Many eloquent words were unsaid. In one of his poems, he says,

“Pleure ton fils, O ma vallée !”

The valley wept.

When the door of the tomb, which had already received the mother, wife, and child, opened for the remains of Lamartine, there came forth clouds of shadows, filling every heart with sorrow. Never did the spade of the grave-digger stir the earth more deeply, than these shadows stirred the souls.

The century lost, at this time, one of the sweetest

of its creatures. In him, Genius appeared in its best form,—that of Simplicity, and Virtue in its most perfect expression,—Unconsciousness !

In his consular experience, there was radiance enough for twenty lives. Poesy owes to him melodies that will be sung as long as there are nightingales to sing their love-songs to their mates. The Tribune owes to him echoes that the winds can never destroy, and History, gems that rust can never corrupt. France owes to him the demonstration that the Republic was the necessary government for her crisis, preparatory to that of her wisdom.

And *we*, we owe to him still more. We owe the impossibility to forget our admiration *for him for a single moment*.

Cormatin, October and November 1871.

I should consider my sad task finished, if contemporary questions did not continually recall Lamartine. His great shadow is profiled upon all our problems. He has examined them all, in turn ; amnesty, compulsory education, separation of Church and State, abolition of Capital Punishment, and the legitimacy or crime of War. At each turn of the road, we find, standing like a faithful sentinel, the written thought of Lamartine. Parliamentary halls for many years, will be the sanctuary of his ideas. I often ask myself, in the hours of anxious deliberation, if we place these ideas at the very frontiers of

the Republic and if I am true to them. My conscience always says. "You are doing your duty. You go where his word sends you."

Then, I place before myself two hypotheses :

Lamartine, twenty years younger.

Lamartine, in the fullness of his age, and in the integrity of his reason.

If Lamartine had been only forty years old at the down-fall of the Empire ; if he had heard the clarions that, sounding for the War with Germany, at the same time, to every attentive ear, sounded the coming hour of our disasters ; if the Republic,—proceeding from a half-invested capital, or from the foul treason of Sedan,—had succeeded in rousing him from his despair as citizen, it would have been impossible not to have agreed with the man of February, and events, by their impulsive force, would have sought for a solution through him. It is Lamartine, who would have made, through scornful Europe, that voyage of dramatic diplomacy, which honored to such a degree the patriotic old age of M. Thiers. It is Lamartine, who would have been nominated in twenty departments, as he had been in twelve, in the year 1848.

His sovereign eloquence would have done the rest and would have demanded of the royalists at Bordeaux, to try through him, for the resuscitation of a dead country. The discussion of principles



would not have been so long, and his antecedents would have imposed the obligation of at once nominating him, President of the Republic.

The Assembly would not be placed upon the hypocritical foundation of the compact of Bordeaux, which slips from under the feet of those who wish to fly from it. The situation would have been more accurately decided. Lamartine would never have proclaimed that equivoke: a Republic without Republicans. He would have risen indignantly before a loyal trial, that would have seemed mean to him, and the pressure of bleeding necessities, aided by his great persuasive faculties, would perhaps have forced the Legitimists of the assembly, to accept the reality of the saving institution, which was then, and which will always be, the Republic.

These premises admitted, I believe that Lamartine would have governed in the way of M. Thiers, but with a broader Democratic expansion. His policy was, especially, one of cohesion of party, and he would have made an attractive and reassuring Republic. He could not have put more enthusiasm into the difficulties of the diplomacy than the actual president, but he would have contracted the field of monarchical chimeras. He would have put his heroic soul into the reconstruction of his country.

If, on the contrary, the great citizen had gone into Parliament, with the eighty years, that he would

have had to-day, it would have been impossible for him not to go and sit near his old colleague Louis Blanc, and the disciples born, as it were, from the spirit of his word. The honor attached to his name, that name inseparable from the Republic—would have made the monarchical faults still more contemptible.

Pretenders, who were only that, and nothing more, would have felt themselves abashed, by the presence of an old man, whose reputation had surpassed all their traditions. Lamartine, only a representative, but still a great man, would have met Edgar Quinet on the road from which Victor Hugo had been forced to disappear for a time, and he would have seated himself in those fertile regions where centres the true Republican vitality. Thus, one with us, counselling us to assure the future by the present, he would have voted, with bitter reservation, no doubt, for the present President of the Republic. Every day, he would have made the most impatient of us understand that there was prudence in sacrifice, and a strengthening of the future in a temporary tolerance.

And he would have extended one hand to M. Thiers, and the other to Gambetta at the same time: to one, who resembles him by his clearness of mind, to the other, who resembles him by his wisdom: and both in their great oratorical powers and good faith.

So far as my humble part in political action is

concerned, I feel that I have not departed from the line traced by my master, and illumined by my conscience. When the clerical party of the assembly affirms its deceptions by its clamors, and its love for order by its tumults, and when Republican France confirms each of our efforts by its applause. I seem to hear above our heads, above all the noise, the voice of Lamartine, who from his world of dreams, says to us, "You are in the perfectly-balanced regions of Truth. You follow the direction of the holy, immutable compass of Justice, Fraternity, and Progress. You are beginning a path that I follow, elsewhere, and which you will continue with me, later. You are disciplining yourselves as a National party. Effort by effort, sacrifice by sacrifice, you bring together the torn members of your mother country. In the burden and heat of the summer, you collect the materials for a divine structure and a social temple. March on with courage. Sacrifice your present hope to the solidity of the movement of the future. Do not complain if the tears of a generation fall into the cement that you are preparing. They will make it enduring. God is with all good workers. God is with the Republic."

Paris, April 1872.

THE END.

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